

**Specification Guide**

**Edexcel GCSE in English (1203, 1204, 5203) and  
English Literature (1213)**

**First examination 2004**

**July 2002**

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#### *Acknowledgements*

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# Introduction

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This guide is for teachers of **Edexcel GCSE English A (1203)**, **GCSE English B (1204)** **GCSE English Mature (5203)** and **GCSE English Literature (1213)**.

It contains guidance for teaching every component of the specifications. There is advice on teaching and assessment, including where possible students' responses and examiners' comments.

The Guide should be read in conjunction with the following:

- GCSE in English A (1203) Specification
- GCSE in English B (1204) Specification
- GCSE in English Mature (5203) Specification
- GCSE in English Literature (1213) Specification
- Specimen Papers and Mark Schemes for English A and B
- Specimen Papers and Mark Schemes for English Literature
- The Edexcel Anthology

See page 131 for details of how to obtain copies.

## **The aims of the Specification Guide are:**

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- To expand on the information contained within the specifications about course requirements;
- To explain assessment procedures;
- To suggest teaching approaches;
- To provide examples of course planning.
- To exemplify students' achievement at key grades, where possible;

## **A combined course**

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Edexcel GCSE English and English Literature are designed to be taught as a combined course. There are opportunities for shared coursework and shared texts across the two subjects. Although the two subjects are listed separately in the Contents, a strict separation of the two subjects would be misleading and unnecessary, and opportunities for integrating the two courses are stressed throughout.

## Changes old to new

### Changes to the National Criteria for English and English Literature:

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#### English

**AO1:** one of the three assessments must be drama-focused. New mark scheme criteria address this new requirement.

**AO2:** one English literary heritage text only is required. The new reading requirements are: a Shakespeare play; an English Literary Heritage text; texts from different cultures and traditions; non-fiction; media.

**AO3:** The assessment of writing, whether coursework or examination, must allocate a third of the available marks to AO3(iii): “*use a range of sentence structures effectively with accurate punctuation and spelling*”.

#### English Literature

*Literary non-fiction* may be used to replace one of the existing components.

#### Common to both English and English Literature specifications

Clean texts: starting in June 2005, all texts taken into the examination room must be unannotated, free of student notes or marks.

Set texts for the open text examinations in both English and English Literature must be chosen from the list of approved editions in Appendix 3 of the English Literature specification.

#### How these changes affect the structure of Edexcel specifications:

English 1203 and 1204: no requirement for pre 1914 prose in coursework

English Literature 1213: *Literary non-fiction* can be used to replace modern poetry or modern prose or modern drama.

## Overview of the new Edexcel GCSE English Specifications

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### Edexcel GCSE English A (1203)

#### Coursework

Speaking and Listening (20%)

- 3 assessments

Written coursework (20%)

- Personal and imaginative writing (10%)
- Different Cultures (5%)
- Shakespeare (5%)

#### Examinations

Examination One (2 hours)

- Modern Poetry (Anthology)
- Non-fiction (Anthology)
- Writing to inform/explain/describe

Examination Two (2 hours)

- Media texts (Unseen)
- Writing to argue/persuade/advise
- Writing to analyse/review/comment

### Edexcel GCSE English B (1204)

#### Coursework

Speaking and Listening (20%)

- 3 assessments

Written coursework (20%)

- Personal and imaginative writing (10%)
- Media texts (5%)
- Shakespeare (5%)

#### Examinations

Examination One (2 hours)

- Modern Poetry (Anthology)
- Different Cultures (Anthology)
- Writing to inform/explain/describe

Examination Two (2 hours)

- Non-fiction (Unseen)
- Writing to argue/persuade/advise
- Writing to analyse/review/comment

### Edexcel GCSE English Literature (1213)

#### Coursework (30%)

- Pre1914 Drama
- Pre 1914 Prose
- Pre 1914 Poetry

#### Examination (70%)

(2hrs 15 mins)

- Section A: Modern Poetry on a theme (Anthology)
  - Section B: Modern Prose (6 texts)
  - Section C: Modern Drama (6 texts)
- Section D: Literary non-fiction (6 texts)

For the examination, students answer **3** questions in all, each from a different section. Students may choose any **3** sections from the **4** above.

# Planning for delivery

## English specification A (1203): what do I have to cover?

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Component	Notes and Reminders
<b>Coursework (AO1) Speaking and Listening</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 assessments: individual talk; group discussion; drama-focused.</li> <li>• What does “drama-focused” mean?</li> <li>• How do I assess it?</li> <li>• How can I integrate AO1 assessments into other elements of the course?</li> </ul>
<b>Coursework Unit 1 (AO3): Personal &amp; imaginative writing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stimulus material and models for writing?</li> <li>• Examples of successful assignments?</li> <li>• How do the new mark schemes work?</li> </ul>
<b>Coursework Unit 2 (AO2): Prose text from a different culture or traditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be prose.</li> <li>• Could be pre or post 1914.</li> <li>• Could be one of five examination set texts.</li> <li>• Could use the Different Cultures short stories in the Edexcel Anthology.</li> <li>• Assignment should address the distinctive cultural context of the text.</li> <li>• If a pre 1914 text from a different culture is used, it could double-up with Literature coursework Unit 2.</li> </ul>
<b>Coursework Unit 3 (AO2): Response to a play by Shakespeare</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should not use the same play for Key Stage 3 SATs and GCSE.</li> <li>• Assignments should allow students to show understanding of whole text, not just one scene or extract.</li> <li>• Assignments which invite discussion of performance/film versions should not allow students to answer on the media version alone without reference to the printed text.</li> <li>• Assignment could double-up with Literature coursework Unit 1 as long as it addresses the separate AOs and mark scheme criteria of the two subjects.</li> </ul>



## 1203 Examinations

<p><b>Examination One:</b>  <b>Qu 1. (AO2) Modern poetry from the Edexcel Anthology</b></p> <p><b>(One Collection only)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question styles: one will name two or more poems; the other will name one and invite students to discuss that named poem and at least one other of their choice.</li> <li>• Students may use the same collection of poems for <i>English</i> and <i>English Literature</i> exams.</li> <li>• Questions will address different named poems in the two exams.</li> <li>• Is it best to deal with the poems in one block of time, or to drip-feed them across the course?</li> <li>• How can I make the poems accessible?</li> <li>• How can Speaking and Listening assessments and personal/imaginative writing assignments be derived from the poems?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examination One:</b>  <b>Qu 2. (AO2) Non-fiction from the Edexcel Anthology</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question will address one out of six pieces.</li> <li>• Students need to be aware of linguistic features and of writers' techniques related to the distinctive type of non-fiction (eg discursive; autobiographical; journal).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examination One:</b>  <b>Qu 3. (AO3) Writing to inform, explain, describe</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A choice of writing tasks.</li> <li>• Where possible, they will be thematically related to the reading passages referred to elsewhere in the paper.</li> <li>• Setting practice tasks: include a form/context, purpose, viewpoint and audience.</li> <li>• New mark schemes to be used when teachers mark exam practice or mock essays.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examination Two:</b>  <b>Qu 1. (AO2) Unprepared Media task</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessed for reading.</li> <li>• Question will address language and distinctive media features such as layout.</li> <li>• See past papers from current 1202 syllabus.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examination Two:</b>  <b>Qu 2. (AO3) Writing to argue, persuade, advise</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A choice of writing tasks.</li> <li>• Where possible, they will be thematically related to the reading passage in the Media question.</li> <li>• Setting practice tasks: include a form/context, purpose, viewpoint and audience.</li> <li>• New mark schemes to be used when teachers mark exam practice or mock essays.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examination Two:</b>  <b>Qu 3. (AO3) Writing to analyse, review, comment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A choice of writing tasks.</li> <li>• Where possible, they will be thematically related to the reading passage in the Media question.</li> <li>• Setting practice tasks: include a form/context, purpose, viewpoint and audience.</li> <li>• New mark schemes to be used when teachers mark exam practice or mock essays.</li> </ul>

## English specification B (1204): what do I have to cover?

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Component	Notes and Reminders
<b>Coursework (AO1) Speaking and Listening</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 assessments: individual talk; group discussion; drama-focused.</li> <li>• What does “drama-focused” mean?</li> <li>• How do I assess it?</li> <li>• How can I integrate AO1 assessments into other elements of the course?</li> </ul>
<b>Coursework Unit 1 (AO3): Personal &amp; imaginative writing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stimulus material and models for writing?</li> <li>• Examples of successful assignments?</li> <li>• How do the new mark schemes work?</li> </ul>
<b>Coursework Unit 2 (AO2): Response to Media texts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Task must address fact and opinion; presentation of information; following an argument; linguistic, structural, presentational devices</li> <li>• Could be a study of the moving image; of print-based media; or a mixture of the two</li> </ul>
<b>Coursework Unit 3 (AO2): Response to a play by Shakespeare</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should not use the same play for Key Stage 3 SATs and GCSE</li> <li>• Assignments should allow students to show understanding of whole text, not just one scene or extract</li> <li>• Assignments which invite discussion of performance/film versions should not allow students to answer on the media version alone without reference to the printed text</li> </ul>

## 1204 Examinations

<p><b>Examination One:</b>  <b>Qu 1. (AO2) Modern poetry from the Edexcel Anthology</b> (<i>One Collection only</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question styles: one will name two or more poems; the other will name one and invite students to discuss one named poem and at least one other of their choice</li> <li>• Is it best to deal with the poems in one block of time, or to drip-feed them across the course?</li> <li>• How can you make the poems accessible?</li> <li>• How can Speaking and Listening assessments and personal/imaginative writing assignments be derived from the poems?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examination One:</b>  <b>Qu 2. (AO2) Different Cultures short stories from the Edexcel Anthology</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question will address two stories out of six</li> <li>• Question tests reading with insight and engagement; making appropriate references; developing interpretations; how writers use linguistic/structural devices to achieve effects</li> <li>• Question will address distinctive cultural context of stories</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examination One:</b>  <b>Qu 3. (AO3) Writing to inform, explain, describe</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A choice of writing tasks</li> <li>• Where possible, they will be thematically related to the reading passages referred to elsewhere in the paper</li> <li>• Setting practice tasks: include a form/context, purpose, viewpoint and audience</li> <li>• New mark schemes to be used when teachers mark exam practice or mock essays</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examination Two:</b>  <b>Qu 1. (AO2) Unprepared Non-fiction task</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-fiction passage printed on examination paper</li> <li>• Passages may be autobiographical or personal viewpoints</li> <li>• Question tests reading with insight and engagement; making appropriate references; developing interpretations; how writers use linguistic/structural devices to achieve effects</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examination Two:</b>  <b>Qu 2. (AO3) Writing to argue, persuade, advise</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A choice of writing tasks</li> <li>• Where possible, they will be thematically related to the reading passage in the Non-fiction question</li> <li>• Setting practice tasks: include a form/context, purpose, viewpoint and audience</li> <li>• New mark schemes to be used when teachers mark exam practice or mock essays</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examination Two:</b>  <b>Qu 3. (AO3) Writing to analyse, review, comment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A choice of writing tasks</li> <li>• Where possible, they will be thematically related to the reading passage in the Non-fiction question</li> <li>• Setting practice tasks: include a form/context, purpose, viewpoint and audience</li> <li>• New mark schemes to be used when teachers mark exam practice or mock essays</li> </ul>

## English Literature (1213): what do I have to cover?

Component	Notes and Reminders
<b>Coursework Unit 1: Pre 1914 Drama</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free choice of text; choice not limited by the National Curriculum list of prescribed writers</li> <li>• Assignment based on a play by Shakespeare can also be used for GCSE English coursework</li> <li>• If so, assignment must address separate AOs and mark scheme criteria for the two subjects.</li> <li>• Assignment should allow students to show understanding of the whole text, not just one scene or extract.</li> <li>• Assignment which invites discussion of performance/film versions should not allow students to answer on the media version alone without reference to the printed text.</li> <li>• In at least one of the coursework units students must show awareness of the social/historical/cultural contexts of texts, and an understanding of literary tradition.</li> </ul>
<b>Coursework Unit 2: Pre 1914 Prose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free choice of text; choice not limited by the National Curriculum list of prescribed writers</li> <li>• If short stories are used, they should form a coherent collection for study (5 or 6), and students should write about at least 2</li> <li>• Assignments should allow students to show understanding of the whole text, not just one chapter or extract.</li> <li>• Assignments which invite discussion of performance/film versions should not allow students to answer on the media version alone without reference to the printed text.</li> <li>• In at least one of the coursework units students must show awareness of the social/historical/cultural contexts of texts, and an understanding of literary tradition.</li> </ul>
<b>Coursework Unit 3: Pre 1914 Poetry</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free choice of text; choice not limited by the National Curriculum list of prescribed writers</li> <li>• Students should study 15 to 20 shorter poems; that number may be reduced on grounds of complexity or length</li> <li>• The assignment should allow students to range across the collection, referring to 5 or 6 poems, though the bulk of the assignment may be a detailed analysis of 2 or 3.</li> <li>• Poems should be grouped by theme, form or poet(s)</li> <li>• Edexcel will publish suggested collections and assignments on the website and in the <i>Specification Guide</i></li> <li>• In at least one of the coursework units students must show awareness of the social/historical/cultural contexts of texts, and an understanding of literary tradition.</li> </ul>

## English Literature 1213: Examination

<p><b>Examination Section A: one collection of Modern Poetry chosen from the three in the Edexcel Anthology</b></p> <p><i>(In the exam, students answer a question from 3 different sections out of 4)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question styles: one will name two or more poems and ask for comparison; the other will name one and invite students to compare that named poem with at least one other of their choice</li> <li>• Students may use the same collection of poems for <i>English</i> and <i>English Literature</i> exams</li> <li>• There will be different poems in the two exams</li> <li>• <i>Literature</i> questions on the poems, unlike the <i>English</i> questions, explicitly ask for comparison</li> <li>• See <b>Notes and Reminders for GCSE English A or B</b> for notes on teaching the poetry collections</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examination Section B: Post 1914 Prose</b></p> <p><i>(In the exam, students answer a question from 3 different sections out of 4)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A choice from 6 texts</li> <li>• Two questions on each text; students answer one question on one text</li> <li>• Foundation Tier questions have bullet points to help students structure their answers</li> <li>• Questions address the characteristics of this genre, such as how characters are presented; narrative techniques such as openings and endings; viewpoint; setting; atmosphere</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examination Section C: Post 1914 Drama</b></p> <p><i>(In the exam, students answer a question from 3 different sections out of 4)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A choice from 6 texts</li> <li>• Two questions on each text; students answer one question on one text</li> <li>• Foundation Tier questions have bullet points to help students structure their answers</li> <li>• Questions address the characteristics of this genre, such as dialogue; dramatic techniques such as contrast and irony; structure; character interaction</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examination Section D: Literary Non-Fiction</b></p> <p><i>(In the exam, Students answer a question from 3 different sections out of 4)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A choice from 6 texts</li> <li>• Two questions on each text; students answer one question on one text</li> <li>• Foundation Tier questions have bullet points to help students structure their answers</li> <li>• Questions address the distinctive non-fiction aspects of the writing</li> </ul>

## **Planning: an overview of the whole course over five terms**

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**Planning Sheet 1** (see page 11) is for a notional middle ability group following **GCSE English A (1203)** and **GCSE English Literature (1213)**.

The chosen texts are:

### **English**

- Shakespeare play: *Romeo and Juliet*\*
- Modern poetry from the Anthology: *Identity*\*
- Different Cultures text: *Chinese Cinderella*\*

### **English Literature**

#### **Coursework**

- Pre 1914 drama: *Romeo and Juliet*\*
- Pre 1914 prose: *Thomas Hardy short stories*
- Pre 1914 poetry: *poems of love and loss*

#### **Examination**

- Modern poetry from the Anthology: *Identity*\*
- Modern drama: *A View from the Bridge*
- Literary non-fiction: *Chinese Cinderella*\*

Texts marked with an asterisk are crossover texts between *English* and *English Literature*. This means that the total number of texts studied to cover English and English Literature is six.

The planning sheet is a useful checklist, but it does over-simplify the course. For example, it may well be preferable to spread the study of the poetry and the non-fiction pieces over a couple of terms rather than tackling them as a single unit of work. Similarly AO1 Speaking and Listening assessments will typically be spread across the course, with perhaps two opportunities for students within each triplet.

The above course has been planned with the bulk of the coursework completed in Year 10. This allows Year 11 to be devoted to examination preparation while still giving time for “mopping up” missing coursework or improving existing pieces. Most centres have mock examinations in December, so it is important that students have covered their examination texts by that time. The planning sheet assumes that teachers will want to start studying examination texts by the summer term of the first year of the course. Some teachers will prefer to integrate coursework and examination preparation throughout the course rather than disposing of coursework early.

**Planning Sheet 2** (see page 13) is designed for a lower ability group. The set texts are:

### **English**

- Shakespeare: *The Merchant of Venice*\*
- Modern Poetry: *In Such a Time as This*\*

### **English Literature**

#### **Coursework**

- Pre 1914 drama: *The Merchant of Venice*\*
- Pre 1914 prose: *Tales of the Supernatural*
- Pre 1914 poetry: *Stories in Verse* (Edexcel suggestion)

#### **Examination**

- Modern poetry: *In Such a Time as This*\*
- Modern Prose: *Animal Farm*
- Modern Drama: *The Long and the Short and the Tall*

\* = crossover texts. Total number of texts studied is six.

## Example of combined planning (1): 1203 and 1213

Edexcel GCSE English and English Literature: Planning Sheet (English A, 1203, and English Literature, 1213)			
Term	Focus/Topic	Outcomes	
		English	English Literature
Autumn Year 1	Pre 1914 short stories: 5 or 6 selected from Thomas Hardy's <i>Wessex Tales</i>	<b>Unit 1 coursework, imaginative writing:</b> a short story using techniques of the genre studied.	<b>Unit 2 coursework: pre 1914 prose</b> assignment, focusing on <i>the presentation of female characters in at least 2 short stories by Hardy</i> (Social/historical/cultural)
	Range of media texts: advertisements, leaflets, articles	<b>AO1:</b> group discussion about persuasive techniques; broadsheet/tabloid styles/presentational devices etc, then report back to the class. <b>Preparation for exam</b> media task.	
Spring Year 1	Shakespeare: <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<b>Unit 3 coursework</b> (Eng) & <b>Unit 1 coursework</b> (Lit) <i>Compare the presentation of Juliet in a film/stage performance with your view of the character from reading the play</i>	
	<b>Poems of love and loss: a selection of pre 1914 poems from the Edexcel website</b>	<b>AO1</b> assessment on the theme of love in <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> and the poems studied (drama-focused): Hot-seat or interview characters from the play or poems (eg Friar Lawrence; the Duke from <i>My Last Duchess</i> )	<b>Unit 3 coursework, pre 1914 poetry:</b> <i>Compare the ways writers over time have written about love</i> (Literary heritage)

**Planning Sheet 1 continued**

<b>Summer Year 1</b>	Chinese <i>Cinderella</i> (Literary non-fiction text)	<b>Unit 1: personal writing</b> about childhood <b>Unit 2 coursework, text from a different culture:</b> assignment focusing on social/cultural aspects of the text	<b>Preparation for Literature exam</b> (Section D set text)
	Modern poetry, collection B: <i>Identity</i> (Spread study over the whole term)	<b>Preparation for English and Literature exams</b> <b>(Year 10 exam components covered.</b> <b>English: media; modern poetry <i>Identity</i></b> <b>English Literature: modern poetry <i>Identity</i>; <i>Chinese Cinderella</i>)</b>	

<b>Term</b>	<b>Topic/focus</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>English Literature</b>
<b>Autumn Year 2</b>	<i>A View from the Bridge</i> (Modern drama text)		<b>Preparation for Literature exam</b> (Section C set text)
	Non-fiction texts from Anthology	<b>Preparation for English exam</b> AO1 Individual presentations	
	<b>Mock examinations</b>	Past/specimen paper: all reading requirements now covered	Past /specimen paper: all set texts now covered
<b>Spring Year 2</b>	Writing skills: specific work on the writing triplets	<b>Preparation for English exams</b>  Final <b>AO1</b> assessments ( <i>by end of March</i> )	
	Assemble written coursework: fill in coursework frontsheets  Practice exam answers	<b>Preparation for English exams,</b> especially the modern poetry, non-fiction and media questions	<b>Preparation for Literature exams:</b> <i>Chinese Cinderella</i> ; <i>A View from the Bridge</i> ; <i>Identity</i>



## Example of combined planning (2): 1204 and 1213

Edexcel GCSE English and English Literature: Planning Sheet (Example for English B, 1204, and English Literature, 1213)			
Term	Topic/focus	Outcomes	
		English	English Literature
Autumn Year 1	Non-fiction writing from the anthology and other sources such as newspapers and text-books	<b>Unit 1 coursework: personal writing</b> A piece of non-fiction writing based on experience	
	Shakespeare: <i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<b>Unit 1 coursework:</b> imaginative writing centred on a courtroom theme.  <b>Unit 3 coursework:</b> <i>Compare portrayals of Shylock in performance</i>  <b>AO1:</b> drama-focused activities based on the play	<b>Unit 1 coursework:</b> crossover piece with English Unit 3.
Spring Year 1	<i>Tales of the supernatural:</i> 5 or 6 stories by writers such as Edgar Allan Poe; Thomas Hardy; Charles Dickens	<b>Unit 1 coursework: imaginative work</b> based on the creation of atmosphere in the stories studied.	<b>Unit 2 coursework: pre 1914 prose assignment</b> focusing on how different writers have used the supernatural (Social, historical, cultural)
	Media texts: a topic chosen from the <i>Specification Guide</i>	<b>AO1:</b> individual presentation about a media topic of individual interest, such as sports reporting; local newspapers etc  <b>Unit 2 coursework:</b> work based on media texts	

## Planning Sheet 2 continued

<b>Summer Year 1</b>	Modern poetry from the Anthology: <i>In Such a Time As This</i> (Spread study over whole term)	<b>Preparation for the English exam</b>	<b>Preparation for the Literature exam</b> (Section A text)
	<i>Animal Farm</i> (book; cartoon version; 2002 television version)	<b>AO1:</b> group discussion about issues raised and about film realisation of the text  <b>Unit 1 coursework: imaginative writing</b> exploring concept of fable and allegory	<b>Preparation for Literature exam</b> (Section B set text)
<b>Autumn Year 2</b>	Pre 1914 poetry Edexcel suggested topic: <i>Stories in Verse</i> (see support material)		<b>Unit 3 coursework: Pre 1914 poetry.</b> <i>Assignment focusing on distinctive subject matter and techniques in a selection of stories in verse</i> (Literary Tradition)
	<i>The Long and the Short and the Tall</i>  <i>Different Cultures short stories</i> from the Anthology <b>Mock examinations</b>	<b>AO1</b> drama-focused assessment:  In groups improvise tensions surrounding the Japanese prisoner.  <b>Preparation for the English exam</b>  All set texts covered	<b>Preparation for Literature exam</b> (Section C set text)  All set texts covered ( <i>Not all the poems have to be covered by this point. Students need to know enough to answer the questions you are setting</i> )
<b>Spring Year 2</b>	Non-fiction texts taken from the media, autobiographies and travel writing   Coursework record sheets	<b>Practice for the unprepared non-fiction section of the English exam</b>  Practice exam questions based on the three triplets  Finish AO1 assessments by end of March	Practice exam answers on set texts: <i>In Such a Time as This; Animal Farm; The Long and the Short and the Tall</i>

## Blank planning sheet

<b>Edexcel combined GCSE English and English Literature: Planning Sheet</b>			
<b>Teacher:</b>		<b>Teaching group:</b>	
<b>Term</b>	<b>Topic/focus</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	
		<b>English</b>	<b>English Literature</b>
<b>Autumn Year 1</b>			
<b>Spring Year 1</b>			
<b>Summer Year 1</b>			

<b>Autumn Year 2</b>			
<b>Spring Year 2</b>			

**Texts chosen**

**English**

Shakespeare text (coursework) \_\_\_\_\_

Different Cultures text (coursework, 1203 only) \_\_\_\_\_

Modern poetry (examination, one collection only) \_\_\_\_\_

**English Literature**

Unit 1: Pre-1914 Drama text \_\_\_\_\_

Unit 2: Pre-1914 Prose text \_\_\_\_\_

Unit 3: Pre-1914 Poetry text \_\_\_\_\_

**Choose 3 from these 4 sections:**

Section A: Modern poetry (examination, one collection only) \_\_\_\_\_

Section B: Modern prose (examination) \_\_\_\_\_

Section C: Modern drama (examination) \_\_\_\_\_

Section D: Literary non-fiction (examination) \_\_\_\_\_

**This blank planning sheet can be duplicated and used for course planning.**

## Crossover opportunities between English and English Literature

There are several reasons for integrating GCSE English and GCSE English Literature into a single course:

- They are generally recognised as a single course leading to two distinct qualifications; the timetable in most centres does not allocate separate lessons to English and English Literature;
- Pressure of time on the subject – on average, about three hours curriculum time per week – forces teachers to look for ways of “doubling up” on reading requirements and assessments;
- The weightings for coursework in both subjects make teachers reluctant to devote more time than is absolutely necessary to complete coursework;
- Many teachers like to regard English and English Literature as a unitary subject; most students seem unaware of the distinction between the two.

English (1203 or 1204)	English Literature (1213)
<p><b>Coursework Unit 3: Shakespeare</b></p> <p><i>The same essay can be submitted for both Units, as long as the separate assessment requirements are met.</i></p>	<p><b>Coursework Unit 1: Pre 1914 Drama</b></p>
<p><b>Coursework Unit 2: Different Cultures and Traditions (1203 only)</b></p> <p><i>Texts which might satisfy the requirements of both units include Huckleberry Finn, Ethan Frome, Edgar Alan Poe short stories.</i></p>	<p><b>Coursework Unit 2: Pre 1914 Prose</b></p>
<p><b>Examination 2F or 4H</b></p> <p><i>Modern poetry from the Edexcel Anthology. The same collection can be used for the English Literature examination.</i></p>	<p><b>Examination 2F or 3H</b></p> <p><b>Section 1: Modern Poetry</b></p>
<p><b>Coursework Unit 2: Different Cultures and Traditions (1203 only)</b></p> <p><i>These texts from the English Literature set text list could be used as the source for a Different Cultures piece of coursework: Of Mice and Men; To Kill a Mockingbird; Angela’s Ashes; Chinese Cinderella; The Diary of Anne Frank.</i></p>	<p><b>Examination 2F or 3H</b></p> <p><i>Section 2: Modern Prose Section 4: Literary non-fiction</i></p>
<p><b>AO1 Speaking and Listening</b></p> <p><i>group discussion of a literature text.</i></p>	<p>Option of <b>oral coursework</b> to assess one of the coursework units.</p>

### How many pieces?

If all opportunities for combining English and English Literature coursework were taken, then the coursework requirements for the two subjects could be met in **four** written pieces (1203 only).

More typically, if the Shakespeare piece is used for both coursework portfolios, **five** pieces of written work would meet the requirements.

## Edexcel Entry Level Certificate in English and Edexcel GCSE English: integrating the two courses

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Students entered for **Edexcel Entry Level English** may also be entered for **Edexcel GCSE English, Foundation Tier**. The coursework requirements for the two subjects are complementary.

### Mapping the coursework requirements:

Edexcel Entry Level English	Edexcel GCSE English A (1203) Coursework
• Module 1: Media	• (Media is an examined task)
• Module 2: Literature	• Different Cultures text or Shakespeare (Coursework Unit 2 or 3)
• Module 3: Non-fiction	• Personal writing (Coursework Unit 1)

Edexcel Entry Level English	Edexcel GCSE English B (1204) Coursework
• Module 1: Media	• Media coursework (Unit 2)
• Module 2: Literature	• Shakespeare (Coursework Unit 3)
• Module 3: Non-fiction	• Personal writing (Coursework Unit 1)

- The Media task for Entry Level would match exactly the requirements for Unit 2, Specification B.
- The Literature task for Entry Level could be based on a Shakespeare play, which would meet the requirements for both Specifications A and B.
- It could also be a text such as *Of Mice and Men*, which would meet the Different Cultures requirements of Specification A.
- The Non-fiction writing for Entry Level could be an account of part-time work or other autobiographical experiences. This would meet the requirements for personal writing, Unit 1, in both specifications A and B.

# English

## English coursework: general comments

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**Coursework remains at the heart of the new specification with the same weighting of marks: 40% divided equally between oral and written coursework.** Teachers have developed a multitude of approaches to coursework since the inception of GCSE. The new specifications allow for both continuity and development.

**The new specification has been streamlined. Only three units are required for English coursework,** the same number as for English Literature. In *English*, the Personal and imaginative writing unit now carries half the marks for the folder and is assessed for writing only, whilst the remaining two units are assessed for reading only. **All coursework units may now be word-processed.** In the Speaking and Listening portfolio, three activities are specified, giving clearer contexts for end of course assessment.

**There is still scope for crossover units.** The Shakespeare Unit in *English* may also be entered for the Pre-1914 Drama Unit for *English Literature* provided it meets the assessment criteria of both subjects. Written work on relevant Literature examination prose texts - for instance *To Kill a Mockingbird* or *The Diary of Anne Frank* - may be used for the Different Cultures and Traditions Unit, as long as it focuses on cultural aspects of the text. As the moderator for both specifications will be the same person, centres may submit completed coursework portfolios of both specifications together in one folder. The *drama-focused activity* in the Speaking and Listening portfolio could be used for extension work on literature texts. Opportunities for integrating *English* and *English Literature* are summarised on page 17 of this guide.

**There are some changes to the marking structure for both written and oral coursework.** One of the most radical means that the mark for the Personal and imaginative writing Unit will be aggregated from two separate marks, one for style and organisation and the other for spelling, punctuation and grammar. Examples of assessments are included in the guide: See page 91

**Balancing the demands of coursework and examination work is critical.** In general it would be prudent to spend not more than 30% of the course time on coursework. Tailoring the content of coursework folders, through careful task setting, both to the specification and to the aptitude of the individual candidate, is also crucial.

**The length of coursework units** is dictated by fitness for purpose. Much depends on the individual candidate's level of ability and a good piece of writing will often define its own length. However, the submission of a single poem of three quatrains is unlikely to fulfil specification requirements in *English* for a writing unit, whilst, at the other extreme, a thousand word thesis for a reading unit will go well beyond what is necessary. As a rough rule of thumb a unit will be typically about 400 to 500 words long.

**The provenance of coursework is a constant worry for moderators.** The specifications allow teachers to advise and guide pupils in the production of coursework but do not permit detailed correction of drafts or the submission of "fair copies" of previously marked work. Teachers must also continue to be vigilant about plagiarism, especially in view of the amount of material available from a variety of sources, including websites which provide model essays and methods of personalising them.

**Coursework retains its traditional importance.** Oral work is central to all English teaching. Written coursework (apart from its role in supporting examination work) essentially provides opportunities for each candidate to showcase writing skills which are not catered for elsewhere

in the specification, and to show evidence of reading in ways which are not constrained by time and the examination room.

## Speaking and Listening

### General comments

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This component retains its 20% weighting and the assessment triplets remain the same, but there are differences in the focus of assessment, the content of the marking grids and the methods of moderation.

**The new specification requires the candidate's final assessment to be based on three activities:**

- **the first listed on the coursework frontsheet (Form A) is drama-focused;**
- **the second involves group discussion;**
- **the third entails an individual extended contribution.**

The first of these is the "new" element (though many teachers will have adapted drama tasks in the past to fit the old syllabus); the Assessment Objectives now **require** candidates to demonstrate their ability "*to adopt roles and communicate with audiences using a range of techniques.*"

**The marking criteria have been changed to accommodate these changes.** For the *drama-focused activity* the final sentence in the *General Criteria* column provides the key descriptor. A hierarchy of attainment develops from the straightforward ability to *adopt a simple role* (Grade G) to the *independently created* role of the A\* descriptor. Access to the higher grades will depend on the candidate's skill in creating a role and the command of techniques to hold and shape an audience's reactions.

There are also some key changes in the **explain, describe, narrate** column, which have a bearing on the *individual extended contribution*. The third bullet point in each grade relates to skills in responding as a listener, for instance in answering questions after a classroom talk.

**The Moderation procedure has been radically altered** and will no longer be based on an Inter Awarding Group tape. **This will be replaced by a more complex, but more sensitive system, initially based on a training video**, exemplifying standards and - a new development - providing guidance on task setting, discussion of which will form part of the agenda of autumn assessment meetings. This will be **supplemented by an extended system of Advisory Visits** in a three yearly cycle. **The "cutting edge" will be a post-award statistical analysis of centre results;** if a centre's results cause concern then the centre will be notified, an advisory visit may follow and, in extreme cases, a moderation visit.

**Assessment of Speaking and Listening carries particular responsibilities.** It is a major component of the specification carrying one fifth of the total marks, and the process is further complicated by the ephemeral nature of oral work. Marking has to be precise and verifiable. **It is even more important now for centres to have clear systems of internal moderation and record keeping. The new specifications require that, for internal standardisation purposes, a sample of each teacher's candidates be re-assessed or moderated by another teacher.** There are many ways of doing this and most centres already have acceptable procedures in place, for instance through pairing of teachers, classroom visits by the teacher examiner or systems of departmental marking of common tasks undertaken by some, or even all, of the centre's Year 11 cohort. It may be that supply cover is necessary to allow for internal standardisation. Senior management are more likely to look upon such a request sympathetically now that the requirement is written into the specifications.



**Good record keeping** is similarly vital. Initial teacher records are bound to be fragmentary because they reflect the need to make instant judgements in classroom conditions. However scrappy these notes are, they should be retained as primary evidence, but they should also be formalised in a permanent record. **This record should include, for each candidate, the details of each task, a date and a mark (as a grade or a number) using the scale in the specification. A written comment, identifying the key features of the candidate's level of achievement in the task, would also be helpful.**

**Task setting will be a key factor in success.** Teachers have developed a wide range of tasks to cover the marking criteria triplets. Nothing in the new specification precludes these, but **there is now a primary need to address the three specified contexts.** Each activity reflects one of the triplet columns, but there will always be exceptions. For instance, assessment of a group discussion will best fit the *discuss, argue, persuade* triplet, but group discussions may become analytical in approach and the second column descriptors may then help to define the mark.

**The outcomes of oral work are unpredictable and teachers need to be flexible in their approach.** Bearing in mind that each candidate's final mark should be based on three separate activities, **a single task may provide assessment opportunities for each category.** Hence a problem solving simulation exercise could be marked for "group discussion and interaction", or as a role play activity, and, if one of the group has to report back in detail, that might count as an "individual extended contribution."

## The three contexts

### 1. Drama-focused activity

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The main focus for assessment is the student's ability to create and project a role, which might be scripted or unscripted, through features of delivery such as intonation, movement and gesture. There are a number of approaches, in addition to those given in the specification on pages 6 and 7:

- Improvisation and working in role

Typically a hot-seating activity, or interviews in a media format with characters from a Literature set text. Simulation exercises, where candidates take on unfamiliar roles, for instance as a member of the community, may also be used.

- Monologues

A candidate takes on a role, for instance from a Literature text, and projects that character convincingly.

- Devising, scripting and performing a script

This might be an individual effort, but it could also be part of a group exercise, though assessment would have to focus on the individual level of ability shown by the candidate in the adoption and projection of a role within the piece. The script might extend a scene from a short story, novel or play or be completely original (and thus suitable for submission for the Personal and Imaginative unit in the written coursework folder).

### 2. Group discussion and interaction

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Note that "group" means any number from two upwards, so pair work is possible. Typical tasks might include the following:

- Group problem-solving tasks

Possibly based on group 'brain storming' sessions, perhaps assembling ideas on a character or a theme in a literature text. Tasks requiring a definite outcome and decision are also suitable, for instance discussing what should be done with a sum of money raised for charity; or to resolve a school based problem (What practical steps can be taken to improve the litter situation in the school?). This activity also provides an opportunity for individual reporting back to the class or teacher by the group spokesperson.

- Preliminary discussion before the presentation of a role playing activity

A small group discussion where views are expressed and developed on a controversial topic - for instance whether capital punishment should be re-introduced. The best way of approaching this is by a framework of structured questions. There are opportunities for extension work in reporting back, or a formal classroom debate on the topic. An example is given after this section.

- Pair work

Discussion through the medium of a worksheet on a poem to define meaning, purpose and style.

- Classroom debates - formal or informal

A debate will also provide opportunities for the "extended individual contribution". A spontaneous discussion may develop for candidates to make "*useful contributions*" (grade E) and "*an impact...through sensitive listening and by challenging and constructive contributions*" (grade B).

### 3. Individual extended contribution

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The second paragraph in the General Criteria column provides the key descriptor for this, but the first column of triplets *explain, describe, narrate* will frequently be needed in assessment. To access the higher grades the candidate will need to show a command of techniques to command a listener's or audience's attention and to choose "*challenging subject matter*" (B grade; column B). An ability to deal with questions will also be a key discriminator. Possible tasks include:

- giving a talk on an area of interest
- group representative roles in group work which require reporting back to the class
- leading speeches in debates
- describing or re-creating experiences
- presenting a review (of a film, book, sporting event or musical event etc) to the rest of the class or as part of a simulated radio/TV programme)

### Sample Speaking and Listening tasks

#### Sample task 1: Drama-focused activity

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The following is an example of a task that could provide opportunities for assessment of role play (drama-focused activity), group discussion and, for the councillor role, for an "individual extended contribution".

The situation involves a local community, where a problem has arisen because of rowdy teenage behaviour outside a local night club. As a result the club has been closed, but the owners now want to re-open it. The council has called a meeting to resolve the difficulties and various representative members of the community have been asked to attend.

The class could be divided into groups, each with a councillor whose task is to chair the meeting, and four community representatives. A lesson could be devoted to the meetings (a classroom where noise will not be a problem is needed). A further lesson would allow for an open meeting where each councillor reports back on his or her findings and decisions after the initial meeting. Any spare class members could be asked to report back to the class on the way each group discussed and resolved the problems, or take on the role of a journalist reporting on the meeting for local radio.

#### *Starlight Night-club Task*

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##### **Briefing Notes**

*Each representative needs to read through their briefing notes carefully and not show them to anyone else. The councillor will need to chair the meeting, allowing each person to present his or her viewpoint in turn before allowing general discussion.*

### ***Councillor***

- You represent the council.
- Your brief is (1) to find out what the views of the local community are on the subject of the re-opening of the Starlight Night-club and to report back to the council, and (2) to see whether you can achieve any agreement on the subject.
- Your role is to chair the meeting. First allow each representative a minute to give his or her opinion; then allow general discussion with the purpose of seeing whether the group can reach a consensus of opinion.
- You should remain neutral and avoid expressing personal opinions during the discussion
- Before closing the meeting you should give a brief summary of what you will report back to the council.
- You will need to close the meeting formally and arrange a second meeting if this is appropriate.

***As a further task, you may be asked to give your presentation to the council of the report of the meeting, including any conclusions reached.***

### ***Police Person***

- You are a community police person; you will listen sympathetically to all viewpoints raised.
- You are particularly concerned about the rising crime rate after closing time in the city centre.
- Drugs are a major problem; this was the original cause of the closure of the night-club.
- There are other problems after closing time, including vandalism, car crime and drunkenness. The closure hasn't particularly reduced the problems but shifted them elsewhere.
- You are also concerned about other members of the community who use the city centre at night. There are many complaints from people who feel threatened by teenage behaviour.
- You are anxious for a solution which will benefit the whole community, including teenagers.
- Increased policing would involve more expenditure by the local authority who are already over budget in their spending.

### ***Macdonald's Night Manager***

- You are mainly concerned about profits but concern for your staff and the property are also priorities.
- There have been problems with drunken youths after closing time over the past few months. Your staff have been threatened; the restaurant has been vandalised and left in a filthy state.
- Your profits have been reduced by the need to spend more on anti-graffiti cleaner than any other food outlet in the area.
- If the nightclub were to re-open you would lose clientele as they would no longer see Macdonald's as the place to go once pubs have closed.
- You think policing should be increased to reduce the problems. You are not keen to employ bouncers.

### ***Female aged 17***

- As far as you are concerned the nightclub provided a much needed entertainment venue; there is little to do at night in the city centre.
- You think the drug problem is exaggerated; most teenagers at the club were simply having a good time and not causing problems.
- drug trafficking and use have not been reduced by the closure of the club.
- You think that teenagers have been unfairly blamed for problems in the city centre.
- You would like to see more, not fewer facilities for teenagers to enjoy themselves in the evenings.
- You think there may be more dangers from bored teenagers roaming the streets with nowhere to go at night.

### ***Local Resident***

- You are the mother of three children and have recently moved into the area. When you bought your house you had no idea of the plan to re-open the nightclub.
- You work all day and often get home quite late at night. Sometimes you have to leave the two youngest children in the charge of the eldest child, aged 12. You would be concerned about their safety if the nightclub re-opened; your children may be woken and frightened by the noise of people arriving and leaving at night.
- You are worried about the noise from the nightclub especially during summer evenings when the family might be outside.
- You fear the drugs reputation the old night-club had and you do not want your children, especially the impressionable eldest one, to be drawn into it.
- You are worried that the tone of the area will go down if crowds of teenagers hang round your street at night. The value of your house may go down.

### ***Vicar of St. John's Church***

- You are open-minded about the re-opening; you feel that everyone should have a free choice and teenagers are entitled to enjoy themselves as much as anyone else.
- However your church and graveyard have been vandalised many times in the last three years and you don't want to create conditions in which more vandalism takes place.
- You hold an alternative youth group on Friday nights and hope more teenagers will attend.
- You are worried about the drink and drug problems which you think are ruining young people's lives; if the nightclub re-opens there will need to be stricter controls.
- You are mainly concerned about the spiritual needs of young people but you realise the need for relaxation too; you think the council could invest more money in providing more constructive entertainment facilities than nightclubs. You want more effective policing of your church at night.

### ***Pub Landlord: 'The Cross Keys'***

- You are mainly concerned about profits, but are also worried about damage to your property and your staff being hassled.
- The re-opening might dent your profits, though legally speaking the problems of under age drinkers in your pub will be reduced because many of the current offenders will go to the nightclub.
- There are problems of vandalism on Friday nights; a re-opened nightclub might reduce the problems. There might be fewer dangers of your pub being used for drug trafficking.
- Your staff is hassled at drinking up time at nights, mainly from young people. The new plan might reduce this.
- It is in your interest to resolve the problems of criminal behaviour at night, but you think the problems lie with society, the police and the council. You have enough to do without having to worry about alleged misbehaviour by teenagers.

### ***Youth/Social Worker***

- You would be in favour of the club remaining closed. You feel it encouraged drug misuse and abuse in the past.
- Past drug prevention programmes were piloted at the club but failed; there was no attempt in your view to make them succeed. You see no reason to think that anything has changed.
- You have just started a new initiative to address the drug problem in the city and the re-opening will undermine it.
- You think that the money used to refurbish the club could be more productively spent elsewhere.
- You would like to see improved facilities (social, entertainment, sports) in the city for young people.

## Sample task 2: Group discussion and interaction, and individual contribution

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Small group discussion can be effective but requires careful management. It could be used as a classroom exercise or as a means of providing a common task for internal moderation exercises. Ideally you need four or five students to a group to ensure the flow of discussion and the aim is to make it as spontaneous as possible.

The topic needs to be fairly controversial and one that teenagers can relate to. Stimulus material is needed to provide a basis for ideas and a framework of questions to structure the discussion. One of the group needs to act as a chair or enabler; this student should be issued with the question sheet and be asked to try to keep the discussion going by using it and also his or her own ideas too. The group ideally should face each other, so that they interact with each other and not the assessor. The stimulus material should be removed so that the discussion is spontaneous. A target time of about 12 minutes is about right though this could be extended. Further outcomes could be a report by the chairperson of the group's ideas or a formal classroom debate on the subject. Assessment will largely focus on the third column of triplets, discuss, argue, persuade. The following provides an example:

### Topic: Identity cards

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#### Introductory stimulus sheet:

*"In February this year the government announced that it was proposing to introduce a form of identity card, but would not proceed with its plans without consulting widely and considering all viewpoints.*

*This identity card would be the same size as a credit card and it would serve two purposes: firstly, to provide proof of identity, and secondly, as an "entitlement card", for instance for social security payments, health care and education services.*

*Modern technology has made this more possible. The computer chip in each card would have the power to store a photograph in digital format, a full set of fingerprints or the imprint of the iris of the holder's eye. It could also store a huge amount of information such as date of birth and address, as well as details of the holder's priority for medical care, state benefits and education. It could be used in place of a library ticket, but it could also be used to store criminal records.*

*The government says it will cost about £475m to implement the scheme and about £50m to £100m to run it. Opponents say it would cost much more than this, possibly £1b to implement and up to £800m to operate. The Government says it would not make it compulsory for citizens to carry cards, but ordinary people might feel that it would be wiser to keep the card on them.*

*The advantages might be that identity cards would improve security and would simplify present systems of identification. ID cards would provide people with an easy method of proving who they are and their rights, from the ordinary, like concessions on public transport or being able to buy alcohol, to crucial matters, for instance entitlement to income support or a pension. It might help to stop crime, prevent social security fraud and discourage illegal immigrants. Those in favour argue that only lawbreakers would have anything to fear and that people who don't want identity cards have something to hide.*

*The disadvantages range from the nuisance of having to carry yet another card around to serious concerns that identity cards would be an infringement of personal liberty and an intrusion on the privacy of an individual. Those against the idea argue that however sophisticated and expensive the technology, the really dangerous criminals and terrorists would find ways round it. They also fear the authorities would use ID cards to target people or communities they felt were causing trouble. The police would be under great pressure and carry*

*enormous responsibility to ensure the system worked properly and fairly. Some critics have even compared the idea to the way cattle are branded to indicate ownership.*

*Identity cards have had a chequered history in this country. They were introduced during the Second World War to improve security, but abandoned shortly afterwards because they caused too much friction between the police and the public. But many other countries - including America and European states - use them.*

*So, this is a very controversial issue. The government wants feedback on it before going ahead with its plans. What are your views?"*

### **Questions for discussion**

1. Would the introduction of an identity card system make your life as a teenager easier or more difficult? Give your reasons.
2. What kind of card would you favour (if any) and for what reasons?
3. How would parents and adults feel about compulsory identity cards for everybody?
4. Do you think that introducing an identity card system would reduce crime and improve security? Explain the reasons for your ideas.
5. Do you think the money could be spent more effectively to combat crime? In what ways?
6. If an identity card system were introduced, do you think it should be compulsory to carry the card? Would you be prepared to carry one all the time?
7. Having considered all the arguments, what is your overall view on identity cards?

### **Formal debate topic**

“The introduction of an identity card system will have more drawbacks than advantages”

You will need two teams of three speakers, a proposer (or opposer), a seconder and a third speaker, each to speak in turn. The first speaker should present the case for or against the motion and the next two speakers should develop their side's argument and should aim to deal with points raised by the previous speeches of the other team. These speeches should be of significant length to allow for assessments as individual extended contributions.

# English: Written coursework

## Unit 1: Personal and imaginative writing

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**The focus for this unit is writing to imagine, explore and entertain.** The Assessment Objectives for writing require students to show they can communicate "*clearly and imaginatively*" in different forms and for different audiences. In this unit the emphasis is very strongly on the imaginative and creative use of language, but marks will also be awarded for the accurate use of English, so a balance between correctness and inventiveness is needed.

**This component of the specification allows students a considerable degree of freedom of approach.** Any form of creative writing is permissible: narrative, description, media scripts, diaries, poetry, travel writing - the possibilities are infinite. The task can be very individual and original, or it can be an imaginative extension or empathetic response to a literary text. There are few restrictions but writing that primarily addresses the other triplets would be unacceptable, for instance analytical essays on literature or discursive essays.

English teachers will have a range of topics that they can draw on to engage their own students. **The past experience of moderators suggests that the best work results when students have been encouraged to express themselves in ways which reflect their own individual interests and aptitudes.** Some of the most engaged writing in past folders has been focused on the candidates' own experiences, perhaps concerning a critical moment or experience in their lives, but there is no restriction on form or subject matter. Length might be a problem, for instance with the submission of poetry; a written commentary could supplement the poems and provide an introduction to them.

**Examples of assignments are given in the specification on page 8, but typically work springs out of what part of the course is being taught.** Empathetic writing can be a way of bolstering knowledge of literature texts and providing new angles for interpretation. Letters, diaries, newspaper front pages, as well as imaginative extensions in the form of alternative endings or added chapters, are all feasible. For instance:

### Letters:

The complete text of the letter Raleigh sends home after his first experiences in the front line in *Journey's End*.

A sequence of letters written by Marco to his wife at key moments in *A View from the Bridge*.  
Miss Caroline Fisher's letter to her mother after her first experiences of teaching in Maycomb (*To Kill a Mockingbird*).

### Diaries/ Memoirs:

A diary written by Jessica from *A Merchant of Venice*.  
Slim's Memoirs from *Of Mice and Men*.

### Extension work/Imaginative Responses:

A servant's description of the Capulets' ball in *Romeo and Juliet*.  
Sergeant Troy's adventures in America after his disappearance (*Far From the Madding Crowd*).  
A radio monologue in the style of Alan Bennett.  
A short story from a child's perspective (*The Basement Room*, Graham Greene, from *Twenty-One Stories*).

**Alternatively, free standing topics can be used.** The following are suggestions to be amended or developed as wished:

**Narrative:**

A story beginning *"I hadn't expected the door to slam shut behind me, but it did..."* and ending *.." the way to escape lay ahead."*

A story linking three items: *a seagull's feather; a photograph of an old lady (or old man); a child's drawing.*

**Description:**

A description of personal experience: a memorable event - a holiday; birthday; special meeting; a moment of triumph or embarrassment.

A description of an atmospheric place - a club; a venue for a sporting/musical event; a land or seascape - bringing out its special qualities by reference to the senses.

**Personal reflection:**

Write about a person who has meant a lot to you or played an important part in your life.

An account of a typical day in your life, perhaps in the form of a newspaper feature *"A Life in the day of..."*

**Note that the assessment requirements have changed for this unit.** The exemplar essays and commentaries starting on page 91 show how the new marking grids should be applied.



## Unit 2: Response to a prose text from a different culture or tradition

### English A, 1203, only

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**The focus of this unit is reading and it will be marked solely for this.** There is no longer any requirement to assess this unit for writing as in the previous Edexcel syllabus. This primarily addresses the first reading assessment objective, which is "*to read with insight and engagement, making appropriate reference to texts and developing and sustaining interpretations of them.*" The fourth objective, which requires candidates to "*select material appropriate to their purpose*" also comes into play. Note that the second part of this objective, which refers to collating "*material from different sources and (making) cross references*", is addressed elsewhere in the specification (Papers 3F and 5H) and is not an issue here. Work may therefore be based on a single whole text.

The same texts that were used in the former syllabus for the *Diverse Cultures* unit could be used for this specification with important provisos. Firstly, **only prose texts may be used** - poetry or drama are no longer permitted - but it can be either fiction or non-fiction. Secondly, **the unit must be based on a whole text**. Short stories may be used but these must make up a substantial, coherent collection, which is defined as at least 5 or 6. The unit deriving from this study must refer to a minimum of two stories, and students should be given the opportunity to write about more if desired.

**The defining aspect of this unit is the cultural context** which has to be from "*a distinctively different culture or tradition.*" Interpreting this can pose problems, but in general it means texts in English, written by an author not originating from the United Kingdom and presenting a society "distinctively" different from British society, are acceptable. This extends to foreign texts in translation which meet these criteria, for instance short stories by Maupassant.

There are some straightforward routes to this unit. **Work could be based on an English Literature set text** which fulfils the above criteria. There are several possibilities: *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Of Mice and Men* have been a rich source of appropriate material in the past. Some of the new literary non-fiction prose texts also, for instance *The Diary of Anne Frank* or *Angela's Ashes*, might be mined in a similar way. **Units may also be based on the short stories in the Different cultures section of the Edexcel Anthology.** Many centres have developed their own approaches to this aspect of the National Curriculum, using texts of their own choice, which would also be suited to the new specification within the above guidelines.

**Analytical work best fulfils the reading objectives of this unit;** empathetic responses to texts are more suited to the writing objectives of Unit 1. However there are opportunities for divergent approaches. For instance, a review of a film version of an appropriate text may be submitted, provided it demonstrates "*understanding of the text*" and has a cultural focus. So a candidate comparing the text and the film of *To Kill a Mockingbird* might usefully look at the role of Calpurnia, which is negligible in the film but of major significance in the novel, and an essay could be based on a comparison of the two presentations, with particular reference to the social background.

Weaker approaches include writing on a text defined solely by its being written by a foreign author; for instance *The Hunt for Red October* may be a good thriller but has little to say about different societies. Straightforward "lit crit" essays (for instance character studies) on a Literature set text would also be of little relevance; a character study of Atticus's role in *To Kill a Mockingbird* might be a good essay from the perspective of English Literature, but not for this unit. The trick is to restructure the subject so that it fits. Thus an essay on the various ideas of justice in Maycomb, comparing and contrasting Bob Ewell's, Heck Tate's and Atticus's approaches, would provide the basis for a more relevant study.

Examples of assignments are given in the specification on page 9, but other suggestions follow:

1. "The course of true love never did run smooth." With reference to a number of short stories, write about the problems that lovers encounter because of social pressures.
2. In what ways do the short stories you have read show how can individuals be hampered by the society in which they live?
3. From a selection of short stories, show how writers present differing ideas of justice in the societies in which their books are set.
4. What do you find interesting about John Grisham's presentation of rural life in 1950s America in *A Painted House*?
5. Compare the roles of the black characters in Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* with the film version. Which version do you find more interesting in the presentation of the black community in Maycomb?

## Unit 2: Media texts

### English B, 1204, only

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#### Focus of the assignment

Candidates should complete an extended assignment that shows an understanding of the nature of the media they have chosen.

Assignments must address Reading Assessment Objectives (ii), (iii) and (v):

- *distinguish between fact and opinion and evaluate how information is presented;*
- *follow an argument, identifying implications and recognising inconsistencies;*
- *understand and evaluate how writers use linguistic, structural and presentational devices to achieve their effects, and comment on ways language varies and changes.*

It is not expected that assignments will focus on all these objectives with equal weight.

Presenting the results of work on the media as coursework gives many opportunities. A greater range of media work can be covered rather than concentrating on the print media. There is also the time to develop some imaginative approaches. The overall emphasis is on reading and the final assessment must evaluate the assignment with that in mind.

Some students can often show an understanding of the media by the way that they use it to create their own artefacts. Others will prefer to write straight analysis. Students can be encouraged to be both creative and analytical but as this unit is examining reading, the analytical writing showing their understanding should predominate. When it is not clear how much practical work has improved the candidates' understanding of their chosen area of study, they are very unlikely to achieve marks in the highest ranges, no matter how skilled their media product is.

Sophisticated media tools have become widely available: the digital video camera, the digital still camera, web page creation software, video editing software, multimedia authoring software, presentation software. Such tools are often very attractive to candidates and when access is allowed students can often present surprising results and convey deep understanding. Equally candidates who use more traditional approaches will not be disadvantaged.

This is an interesting unit for students and teachers, and the temptation could be to devote more time towards it than its weighting of 5% warrants. The unit is not supposed to be a full media studies course. A carefully constructed and delimited task would be more appropriate than an extended study of a wide subject area.

Some excellent high quality online resources, many free, are available and some of these are referred to in the examples below.

#### Examples of coursework assignments

##### *A study of a film realisation of a literature text, or a comparison of two film versions of the same scene*

This could be linked with the study of a Shakespeare play or a Literature set text, but its emphasis would need to be on the film techniques used in interpreting the text. It would not be possible to submit a single essay to cover both the Media Unit and the Shakespeare Unit.

*understand and evaluate how writers use linguistic, structural and presentational devices to achieve their effects, and comment on ways language varies and changes.*

### ***The media campaign***

A study can be made of the way that a new product is launched. The candidate should look at the way that the campaign is organised, the media that are used and how the messages are tailored to the particular media and to the audiences.

The candidate could be asked to plan and carry out a fictitious campaign using at least two areas eg television, radio, poster, newspaper. The main assessment will focus on the candidate's analysis of what they have done and how each medium has contributed to their aim.

*follow an argument, identifying implications and recognising inconsistencies;*

*understand and evaluate how writers use linguistic, structural and presentational devices to achieve their effects, and comment on ways language varies and changes.*

### ***Advertisements***

<http://adbusters.org/uncommercials/>

The Adbusters site is full of extremely provocative spoof ads and what they call "uncommercials". Choosing two or three of these will cause debate about the nature of advertising and the techniques that are used. Another exercise could be to produce two further spoof ads with reflections on what the designer of the new advertisements hopes to achieve.

*understand and evaluate how writers use linguistic, structural and presentational devices to achieve their effects, and comment on ways language varies and changes.*

### ***Cliches***

<http://media.guardian.co.uk/Print/0,3858,4193939,00.html>

TV, Radio, Newspapers all have their conventions and their cliches. Students can be encouraged to choose a medium, discuss what the cliches are, why they are used, how they are used and what they achieve. A good starting point is the Guardian site above where politicians' clichés are listed.

*understand and evaluate how writers use linguistic, structural and presentational devices to achieve their effects, and comment on ways language varies and changes.*

### ***Interviews***

[http://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/teaching\\_materials/talk\\_on\\_box.html](http://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/teaching_materials/talk_on_box.html)

The interviews and transcripts with Oona King, Victoria Beckham, Tony Benn and others are available online to be downloaded. There is work that can be done here to study the interview style and speech styles of the participants. Candidates might look at how the interviewing style limits the responses of the interviewee.

*follow an argument, identifying implications and recognising inconsistencies;  
distinguish between fact and opinion and evaluate how information is presented;*

### ***The event***

Take a national event and look in detail at the way an event is covered by radio, television and two or three newspapers. Try to define what they have in common and what is unique to each. Consider how the news is shaped by the medium, and the audience that it is trying to reach.

*distinguish between fact and opinion and evaluate how information is presented;*

### ***The language of the streets***

The small digital camera, still or video, can be used to capture a range of the “texts” that are a part of the outside world: street signs, advertisements, instructions, directions, graffiti, symbols, logos, shop fronts etc. The analysis should focus on the range of styles and the range of meanings.

*understand and evaluate how writers use linguistic, structural and presentational devices to achieve their effects, and comment on ways language varies and changes.*

### ***Looking for Richard***

[http://www.filmeducation.org/secondary/s\\_archive/documentary/LFRichard/synopsis](http://www.filmeducation.org/secondary/s_archive/documentary/LFRichard/synopsis)

The documentary by Al Pacino *Looking for Richard* is a way of looking at both Shakespeare and documentary. The Film Education website has a great deal of background work on this film and the way that filmed Shakespeare differs from staged Shakespeare.

*distinguish between fact and opinion and evaluate how information is presented;*

### ***The documentary***

#### **Objectivity and subjectivity**

The polemical documentary can be studied: to ascertain how the ideas are developed to look at the techniques that are used and how the final message is achieved.

The objective documentary can be studied to show how objectivity is striven for, how balance is (or is not) achieved.

*follow an argument*

*understand and evaluate how writers use linguistic, structural and presentational devices to achieve their effects, and comment on ways language varies and changes.*

### ***Producing for an audience***

Students can discover what younger pupils are studying at KS3. They can then devise a media study package to assist the teaching of a topic, theme, poem or play. Candidates should spend some time reflecting on their work.

*understand and evaluate how writers use linguistic, structural and presentational devices to achieve their effects, and comment on ways language varies and changes.*

### **Some useful websites**

[http://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/publications/media\\_stuff/pdf/KS3MED1.pdf](http://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/publications/media_stuff/pdf/KS3MED1.pdf)

<http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/>

<http://www.nmsi.ac.uk/nmpft/>

[http://www.filmeducation.org/secondary/s\\_archive/](http://www.filmeducation.org/secondary/s_archive/)

<http://www.bfi.org.uk/education/teachers/classroom/miic/index.html>

## Unit 3: Work based on a play by Shakespeare

### 1203 and 1204

This is familiar territory for teachers and there are few changes in either English or English Literature from the last syllabus. Whilst some centres may prefer to enter separate coursework units on pre-1914 drama for English Literature, including work on playwrights other than Shakespeare, the link between the Shakespeare Unit in English and the Pre-1914 unit in English Literature remains. The same work on Shakespeare may be submitted for both specifications, provided it fulfils both sets of Assessment Objectives. These differ but are essentially compatible:

Assessment Objectives	
English	English Literature
read with insight develop and sustain interpretation of texts	respond to texts critically, sensitively and in detail  select appropriate ways to convey response
make appropriate references to texts	use textual evidence as appropriate  <i>relate texts to their social, cultural and historical contexts and literary tradition*</i>
<i>understand and evaluate how writers use linguistic, structural and presentational devices</i>	
<i>comment on ways language varies and changes</i>	

\*This objective could be covered in any (or all) of the coursework units.

The main differences are italicised in the grid, but most of them are easily reconciled. For instance, an essay on Shakespeare for English Literature is likely to deal with character, plot, theme and language in a way that will also fulfil the need "*to understand and evaluate linguistic, structural and presentation devices*" in English. In English Literature, the strand referring to historical context and literary tradition may be complied with in another of the coursework units. The critical difference then is the strand referring to language change. Thus any assignments targeted at both specifications must contain an element which addresses the need to comment on the ways "*language varies and changes*" to fulfil the English objectives.

It is not expected that candidates should show detailed knowledge of linguistic differences between Shakespearean and modern English. This is the stuff of postgraduate theses. It does however mean that any study of Shakespeare should incorporate some attention to the language used. Thus as an example an analysis of Othello's character should deal with the language and imagery used to express his passionate feelings and will then be bound to include an element of linguistic evaluation. A candidate who writes an essay on this subject will have had to have taken into account sixteenth century meanings of words and unpacked the implications of imagery which is alien to the modern world. Also the requirement about variation in language could be addressed by a study that looks at the way Othello's language and imagery changes in the play. Most topics can be adapted to allow for comment on the use of language relevant to both specifications.

As with Unit 2, **whole texts must form the basis of study and the written work must show this. One scene may be chosen as the springboard for study but this must then be developed to bring in the rest of the text.** For instance Act 1 Scene 3 of *The Merchant of Venice* could be looked at first to establish the initial relationship between Shylock and Antonio. Then the study could be widened to explore the ways in which the relationship develops until Shylock's demise at the end of Act 4. Finally the need to comment on language could be addressed by examining and comparing the ways in which the language of their speeches brings out their view of each other, in particular their hatred of each other's character and society. An essay on the presentation of racial antagonism in the play would naturally involve a study of the language and the extent to which it is racist by both modern standards. Thus both language and theme could be addressed in a way which would incorporate the linguistic focus needed for English and the historical context for English Literature. In *Romeo and Juliet* the language of love could be looked at, with particular focus on the contrast between Romeo's speeches about Rosaline and the love duets between Romeo and Juliet in the rest of the play. An essay based on a film realisation of the text could address how Romeo or Juliet's language varies at different points in the play, and how this comes across both as printed dialogue and in performance.

**The choice of text is left to centres but they must opt for a play other than their Key Stage 3 text.** There is of course a wealth of choice but it will need careful decision-making. Much depends on factors such as the ability of the class and the interests of the teacher. The experience of moderators is that almost any play can be studied but the trick is to find aspects of the text that teenagers can grasp and relate to. Even a long and very demanding play such as *King Lear* has stimulated able candidates in, for instance, an investigation of family relationships. *The Merchant of Venice* is a more manageable play in this respect and raises issues of love, relationships, gender, racism and money, which have also been successfully explored in the past by GCSE candidates. Many centres may wish to build on their teaching experience of the former Key Stage 3 text *Romeo and Juliet*, adapting their schemes of work for whole text study. Themes of fate, love and gang warfare (inter alia) could be studied. This play is also rich in terms of film versions. Other texts that might be considered include *The Taming of the Shrew*, fertile ground for gender themes, and *Much ado About Nothing*, which reflects many of the themes of *Othello* but in a comic context. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has the virtue of being brief but rich in language, theme and plot; again a wide range of film interpretations is available.

**A wide range of approaches is possible.** Critical analysis of central themes or characters is acceptable, as are critiques of theatrical or video presentations of the play or written outcomes from theatre workshops, as long as they are closely related to the text. Imaginative extensions of the text or empathetic responses are possible provided they address the relevant assessment criteria. A letter or diary written in the person of a character in the play must provide evidence of the candidate's awareness of language, context and theme. One way of ensuring that such evidence is securely shown within the unit would be for the candidate to include a commentary on it, which could provide explicit links between Shakespeare's text and the candidate's creative response and thus ensure that all relevant assessment requirements are met. A tried and tested way of linking analytical work and creative work is the practice of submitting two pieces of work for this unit, one an empathetic response and the other analytical.

## English coursework Unit 3 for centres in Wales

### 1203 and 1204

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While centres in England study a play by Shakespeare for Unit 3 coursework, centres in Wales should study a complete play or plays by a Welsh author writing in English, or that has a Welsh setting or special relevance to Wales.

Most of the following suggestions are taken from *Approaches to the Study of Drama from Wales* by Mandy Esseen, published by the National Language Unit of Wales (ISBN 1 86085 437 0), which also contains useful teaching ideas.

#### Suggested plays by Welsh writers

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*Under Milk Wood* – Dylan Thomas

*Act One Wales: Thirteen One Act Plays* – Ed. Phil Clark (Seren 1997)

*The View from Row G* – Dannie Abse (Seren 1992)

*Three Plays* – Edward Thomas (Seren 1994)

*Three Plays* – Charles Way (Seren 1994)

If a collection of one act plays is studied, students should read a substantial number and the assignment should allow students to range across the collection. They should not restrict their response to a single one act play.

#### Suggested assignments on *Under Milk Wood*

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1. Write about a character in the play that appeals to you and show how Dylan Thomas's presentation has made him or her interesting.
2. What do you think are the most interesting features of the imaginary town of Llaregyb as Dylan Thomas presents them? How successful is Dylan Thomas in creating a picture in sound of the town?
3. *Under Milk Wood* was written as "a play for voices". Imagine that you have been asked to direct a new radio production of the play for radio. Write an essay outlining how you would go about this and how you would try to bring out its key features. Make particular reference to: (i) Thomas's use of language (ii) the kinds of voices needed for the differing characters (iii) music (iv) sound effects.



# The English examinations

## Section A: Modern poetry

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This section is relevant to English 1203 and 1204 (Paper 2F or 4H), and English Literature 1213 (Paper 2F or 3H)

**Note: The commentaries on individual poems are intended to provoke thought. They represent various teachers' readings of those poems, and do not present a definitive interpretation.**

### General introduction

The three modern poetry themed collections provide clear benefits for the student of English. Not only do they offer an eclectic mix of poems with far-reaching themes and subjects, the same cluster can also be used for both **GCSE English (1203 and 1204)** and **English Literature (1213)**. Edexcel will ensure that questions relate to different named poems in the two examinations.

### Assessment Objectives and Unit descriptions

Whilst the same collection of poems can be used for both **GCSE English (1203 and 1204)** and **English Literature (1213)** it is important to note that the assessment objectives for each subject differ slightly:

#### GCSE English (1203 and 1204)

Candidates will be assessed for the following Reading objectives:

- (i) *Read with insight and engagement, making appropriate references to texts and developing and sustaining interpretations of them;*
- (v) *Understand and evaluate how writers use linguistic, structural and presentational devices to achieve their effects and comment on ways language varies and changes.*

#### GCSE English Literature (1213)

Candidates will be assessed for the following objectives:

- (i) *Respond to texts critically, sensitively and in detail, selecting appropriate ways to convey their response, using textual evidence as appropriate;*
- (iii) *Explore relationships and comparisons between texts, selecting and evaluating relevant material.*

Whilst comparison of poems is **not** a requirement of the English exam (but candidates may still do so if they wish), it **is** an assessment objective of the English Literature exam.

### GCSE English 1203 and 1204, Paper 2F or 4H

#### Question 1: Modern poetry from the anthology

There will be a **choice of two** questions set on each of the three thematic collections of poetry in the Edexcel Anthology: **In Such a Time as This; Identity; Nature**.

Students must answer **one** question, which will be assessed for Reading, based on close reading of **one** of the prepared collections, showing sustained interpretation of content, language and presentation. The question will focus on **at least two** poems. Questions may centre on two or

three named poems, or on a named poem and a poem or poems chosen by the candidate from their chosen thematic collection.

*The questions will focus on Reading Assessment Objectives (i) and (v).*

### **GCSE English Literature 1213, Paper 2F or 3H**

#### **Section A: Modern poetry from the anthology**

There will be **two** questions set on each collection of thematic poetry from the Edexcel Anthology. Candidates will be required to answer **one** question based on **one** of the thematic collections in the anthology: **In Such a Time as This; Identity; Nature**.

Candidates will be asked to explore relationships and comparisons between poems, selecting and evaluating relevant material, and to explore the language, structure and form of the poems.

Candidates will be required to write about a **minimum of two** poems. At least one of the poems will be named in the question; candidates will be required to compare that poem with at least one other poem, which may be named, or may be selected by the candidate.

*The questions will focus on Assessment Objectives (i) and (iii).*

Since the questions in both the English and English Literature exams will explicitly name at least one poem, it is therefore in the candidates' interests to have a working knowledge of all sixteen poems in their chosen collection, rather than of a select few.

## Collection A: In Such a Time as This

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### Approaches to teaching the collection

#### Grouping possibilities

Within this collection there are several direct ways of categorising the poems:

**Childhood experiences/memories** (*Half-past Two, Hide and Seek, Brendon Gallacher, The House*);

**Family tension** (*Yellow, Lucozade*);

**Significant places** (*The House, Death in Leamington, Electricity Comes to Cocoa Bottom*);

**Cultural identity** (*Where the Scattering Began, Wherever I Hang*);

**War and its consequences** (*The Send-off, Dulce et Decorum Est, From War Music, Refugee Blues*);

**Negative experiences** (*Yellow, The House, You Will Be Hearing From Us Shortly*);

**Discrimination** (*You Will Be Hearing From Us Shortly, Refugee Blues*);

**The natural world** (*The House, Electricity Comes to Cocoa Bottom, The Darkling Thrush*).

Jackie Kay's poems clearly work well together as each reflects a strong narrative, individual voice. Likewise, Wilfred Owen's war poems are distinct in their anti-war sentiment.

However, equally fruitful comparisons can be made by linking the poems' stylistic techniques, such as **viewpoint, form, presentational devices** and **language**. **Personification** is a common feature in several poems (*Hide and Seek, Yellow, Electricity Comes to Cocoa Bottom*). Different poets use **personal pronouns** for varying effect, such as the markedly authorial use of the second person 'you' in *Hide and Seek* and *You Will Be Hearing From Us Shortly* and in a more subtle yet equally powerful manner in *Dulce et Decorum Est*. **Negative, violent language** distinguishes several poems and sets their tone, such as *Dulce et Decorum Est* and *From War Music*. Some poems make effective use of **conversational style** (*Hide and Seek, Jackie Kay's poems, You Will Be Hearing From Us Shortly*) or are even **dialectal** in tone (*Wherever I Hang*). Poems like *Half-past Two* and *You Will Be Hearing From Us Shortly* both distinctively employ **presentational devices** to enhance their overall impact. **Rhyme** and **rhythm** are characteristic of several poems in the collection.

In the English Literature examination responses which are rich in originality of comparison will be well-rewarded, so candidates should be encouraged to experiment with different ways of linking the poems.

#### Notes on individual poems

The commentaries below relate to the less well-known poems in the collection. There is published material on most of the remaining poems. The internet is a useful source of critical comment. Type the title and poet into the [www.google.co.uk](http://www.google.co.uk) search box and a host of material will appear.

#### Jackie Kay's poems

Jackie Kay (poet, playwright and novelist) was born in 1961 in Edinburgh. Her mother was Scottish and her father was Nigerian. She was adopted by a white couple and brought up in Glasgow. Her adopted parents were communists who took their children on anti-apartheid protests and peace rallies.

#### *Yellow* by Jackie Kay

#### Summary

A strong narrative poem full of acute observations mainly of the main character's family and the relationships between them, particularly of her mother. This is probably autobiographical, since the repetition of 'Comrade' links to her adoptive father's communist beliefs and she locates the poem in her own birthplace, Edinburgh.

### Ways into the poem

- In the American state of Florida, a boy ‘divorced’ his parents because he was fed up with them. Should this legislation be introduced into the UK and allow young people rights over their parents? Discuss.
- Discuss the associations of different colours.

### Structure and form

Two stanzas of free verse (aided by the enjambement), of near equal length (thirteen and eleven lines respectively).

### Language/comments

- Personification is used frequently in this poem, as she breathes life into the hedge, the flowers and the food on the plate. She clearly identifies with the crocuses which ‘*try to talk*’ as she too does not communicate verbally in this poem, perhaps finding it hard to get a word in! She builds a personality around each object, for example, the pineapple ring is ‘*happy*’. Attributing characters to these things is a comfort to her, as the human relationships which daily surround her only bring disillusionment. The generation gap is implied with ‘*what she calls a plate*’, as if her mother’s language is alien and old-fashioned.
- Bird imagery is very strong and is reflected in the metaphor ‘*my nest of hair*’ which has negative associations ie messy and tangled. Even her brother is onomatopoeically ‘*chirping*’ which communicates a short, high-pitched voice that fades in the background behind the weeping and barking of his parents. He too feels disturbed by them. In addition, the bird’s release is a symbol of freedom – something she doesn’t appear to feel in this poem and so is possibly envious as she indeed says ‘*I dream of budgies born in my curls*’ as if it is a welcoming thought.
- Colour imagery is introduced in the title and developed throughout the poem. Students should speculate on the relevance and significance of the title and discuss the associations of yellow and the other colours for the narrator.
- From the light-hearted and lively opening, the first stanza soon adopts a serious tone with the somewhat shocking action of her mother weeping. This is an unexpected verb and produces strong imagery as we can imagine her mother physically sobbing. The enjambement works well here ‘*weeps into it before/drying the dishes*’ as we do not expect this mundane chore to follow the emotional outburst. By linking the two actions, the poet suggests it is a common occurrence and that nobody takes notice of her anymore; we are invited to feel sympathetic.
- The visits of both relatives have negative connotations. Aunt Peggy violently ‘*shoves*’ her head into the egg yolk (another subtle bird image) and issues two imperatives ‘*Don’t be fussy! Get that down you!*’ both of which, shown by the punctuation, are loudly exclaimed.
- The first stanza paints a rather inactive portrait, as the repetitive pattern ‘*My mother...My father...My brother...*’ precisely locates each relative and adds a static atmosphere as if she is motionless in the room looking around her, like a freeze frame. The second stanza is more chronological in its structure ‘*When...When...When...Then*’
- Inclusion of mainly reported and some direct speech (distinguished by italics and speech marks) gives us an insight into the other characters through gauging their differing tones and personalities.

### Other assessment opportunities

#### Speaking and Listening

- *Breakfast at My House* (could also be used as a personal writing title).

#### Personal and imaginative writing coursework

- Descriptive writing: using the third person narrative, develop the relationship the main character has with each family member: mother, father, brother, Aunt Peggy, expanding on some of the issues raised, such as her mother’s weeping and why she does it.

- Dramatic monologue: using first person in voice of main character, develop the situation in the poem. (Could use *Talking Heads* monologue as a stimulus).

## ***Lucozade*** by Jackie Kay

### **Summary**

A distinctly personal, again possibly autobiographical poem in which the poet details a hospital visit to her sick mother. Tension is high as her mother is clearly demanding and difficult.

### **Ways into the poem**

Use the students' own experiences as speaking and listening activities: a memory of visiting a sick relative in hospital or a stereotypical hospital scene.

### **Structure and form**

Seven four line verses, with a one line stanza as the eighth which is clearly separated and ending on an optimistic note. Although there is no fixed rhyme scheme, Kay nevertheless deliberately rhymes some line endings eg '*eyes...lies...size*' as well as end rhymes with mid rhymes '*head...bed*' and '*low...know*', all of which help maintain the rhythm and pace of the poem.

### **Language/comments**

- The mother issues a string of repetitive imperatives in the first three stanzas '*Don't bring...*' which depicts her as a trying and challenging individual and creates a negative mood. Repetition too is a feature of this poem '*sad chrysanthemums...orange nostalgia*' which convey her mother's repetitive comments. Mother does not conform to the stereotype of the patient in her demands.
- The abundance of prepositions at the start puts everything in its place (even her mother) and casts a static feel '*on a high bed next to...*'
- We learn a great deal about her mother's personality by what she says as '*doctors...white lies*' suggests she mistrusts the medical profession, which maybe explains why she appears so cantankerous in the hospital situation.
- The luxuries she demands are greedy in their delivery, highlighted by the adjectives of quantity '*big...generous...dirty big...*' and contrast the scene itself ie drab, clinical '*ward 10B*'.
- The positive ending contrasts with the pessimistic opening as she is no longer '*groggy and low*' but '*light and radiant*'.
- The single line last stanza breaks the pattern of the poem and culminates on an optimistic note. The whole way through the poem the mother speaks AT her daughter, never TO her or WITH her. The requests are all material ones – never companionship. Yet the daughter does not appear to question that, merely feeling happy that her mother has recovered and her initial fears ('*I am scared my mum is going to die*') have been banished. We feel sympathy with the daughter, but what do we feel towards the mother? Amusement? Anger?

### **Other assessment opportunities**

#### **Personal and imaginative writing coursework**

- Descriptive Writing: Either of being in hospital as a patient for an extended period, or visiting someone. This type of personal writing can particularly appeal to the senses.
- Dramatic Monologue: An old person looks back over their life, talking to their grandchild from their hospital bed.

## ***Brendon Gallacher*** by Jackie Kay

### **Summary**

Brendon Gallacher is an imaginary childhood friend, around whom the poet builds a personality, life and character. Her mother's realisation of the truth brings about his 'death'.

### **Way into the poem**

Discussion of memories of imaginary friends – do the students remember having them? How did they invent their characters, names etc?

### **Structure and form**

Five stanzas of five lines, with each verse's line ends mostly rhyming. Song-like rhythm with repetition of '*my Brendon Gallacher*' like a chorus.

### **Language/comments**

- The poet carefully constructs the imaginary friend, as she details his age, nationality, parents and number of siblings. Interestingly she deliberately appears to contrast his background with her own ie he comes from a large family whilst she comes from a small one. These oppositions are made explicit by the separation of the third person and first person pronouns '*He...I*'. The friend she has created holds many attractions for her: he's older, from a different culture (and therefore mysterious, exciting) and from a 'rough' background.
- The alliterative '*hold my hand*' is sweetly innocent and reflects that need for physical contact and intimacy. She depicts him as the dominant partner '*take me by the river*' and welcomes the protectiveness he provides.
- She enjoys shocking her mother with his home life details, ie the suggestion his mother is an alcoholic, but ironically the reason she gives for failing to invite him round is the holes in his trousers!
- The cheery, warm and happy mood created in the first three stanzas turns cold and sour in the final two stanzas, when her mother learns the truth. From this turning point the atmosphere of the poem changes and becomes sad and we now understand the significance of the repetition of '*my*' Brendon Gallacher, as he was indeed '*hers*' only, a figment of her imagination.
- Yet the poem ends on a melodramatic and optimistic note, as despite his 'death', her memories are still alive and flourishing in the adjectives and alliteration, '*his spiky hair, his impish grin, his funning flapping ear*'. Notice her physical description of him comes last, as it is not as important to her as his personality and character, which she initially gave us.

### **Other assessment opportunities**

#### **Personal and imaginative writing coursework**

- Descriptive Writing: My Imaginary Friend as a Child compared to My Imaginary Friend as a Teenager – how different would the two characters be?
- The Day my Imaginary Friend Died...

### **Comparing Jackie Kay's poems**

Family relationships link all three poems, in particular that which exists between a mother and her daughter. Each poem uses direct speech to add more realism to the scenes being depicted as well as using the present tense for a feeling of immediacy. *Yellow* and *Brendon Gallacher* are both imaginative in their descriptions, and all three poems blend positive and negative experiences. The first person dominates each poem in keeping with these very personal accounts.

## *The House* by Matthew Sweeney

### Summary

The adult narrator describes the house he grew up in, taking the reader on a visual tour of its many 'inhabitants' and rooms. The images he conveys are mostly negative and dreary.

### Way into the poem

Use the students' own experiences as speaking and listening activities: a memory of a room or building you have been attached to at some time in your life. Describe in detail, using the following prompts: physical description of the room or building (use the five senses), who uses it, the memories you associate with it and the connection/significance it holds for you (*explain, describe, narrate / explore, analyse, imagine*).

### Structure and form

One stanza of free verse with a narrative style, built up of several memories in the third person, which unexpectedly switches to the first person in the final line.

### Language/comments

- The opening creates a negative atmosphere 'cold...wind...dark', with some destructive, almost violent verbs 'battered...blew down'. Thus the initial impression of *The House* is not a favourable or particularly attractive one, which is strengthened as the poem unfolds by the repetitious pattern of 'never'.
- The 'guests' of the house comprise a bizarre group 'rats...ghost...dry corpses...the drowned...cockroaches...dog...crows.' The only humans mentioned, until the final line, are dead ones! The tone of the poem is quite varied and there seems to be a morbid fascination with death/supernatural. However, the ghost is 'friendly' (described by the fittingly fleeting verb 'glimpsed'). The Atlantic's 'ration' of those who drown is disturbingly original in its acceptance and inevitability of death. An element of myth or folklore seems evident 'carried there on a door' and 'dry corpses' as if the house were used as a kind of living mortuary. Significantly the house 'hosted' the dry corpses, as if proudly showing them round, like a party host.
- The house lacks life and vitality. This is reinforced by the abundance of prepositions 'under...Downhill...at the foot...outside', giving the poem a static, inactive feel which takes us on a visual journey through the building and its environs. Our observations are being directed and lead as the poet is in control.
- The monosyllabic 'lamb's bleed dry' is shocking in the casual, off-hand way it is delivered, almost as an afterthought. Although the image is disgusting, it is probably killed for its meat and therefore justified by the boy.
- Alliteration is used to highlight some of the repulsive or violent elements 'cockroaches...came...cupboard...' and 'shotgun sometimes' yet there is no fear in the narration as the tone here is rather matter-of-fact.
- The word 'but' in line 29 changes the tone of the poem. The piano can represent something joyful and lively amidst these unwelcoming and morbid images, and it is a shock to discover that the home was the poet's childhood home. It makes us re-evaluate all that has gone before in the poem.
- As we try to connect the various images, the last, simple sentence is in contrast to the mostly complex sentences used in the poem. This short last line, which moves into the first person pronoun, is effectively unexpected, as the poem adopts a personal tone whereas we have felt distanced and detached during the poem.

### Other assessment opportunities

#### Personal and imaginative writing coursework

In one of Matthew Sweeney's poetry workshops, students were asked to write a poem by communicating emotions through concrete images and had to associate an abstract feeling (hate, fear, happiness) with a particular room (attic bedroom, kitchen). Students could be given

random pairs, or choose their own, deciding on the form and structure of their poems. Examples of titles were ‘*Cellar of Bliss*’, ‘*Garage of Resentment*’ and ‘*Attic of Freedom*’.

***Electricity Comes to Cocoa Bottom*** by Marcia Douglas (taken from her poetry collection of that title)

**Marcia Douglas** was born in England and grew up in Jamaica. She has given talks on the history and culture of the Caribbean, as well as her development there as a woman and writer.

### Summary

This poem conveys the phenomenon of electricity coming to a house in a village in the Caribbean. Both humans, especially children, and animals are drawn to witness the experience, pulled towards it like magnets. The language used is familiar, yet poetic and descriptive with rhythmic variations. It is a nostalgic and celebratory poem.

### Ways into the poem

- Imagine life, as previous generations experienced it, without the domestic luxuries we enjoy, such as electric lights, running tap water, central heating, electric/gas fires and cookers. Role play a domestic scene where one of these amenities happens for the first time. (Speaking and Listening: *explore, analyse, imagine*)
- Stimulus material: Imtiaz Dharker’s poem ‘*Blessing*’ which describes a burst waterpipe in a developing country and the importance of water to the community.

### Structure and form

The first two stanzas of free verse are of similar length (detailing the audience settling and then reacting to this event), whilst the third is noticeably shorter (commiserating their failure to record it). The line lengths also vary which is particularly significant between stanzas one and two, since the poem appears to come to a close as the natural light fades ‘Closing. Closing’, then bursts into life as the electricity is switched on ‘Light!’

### Language/comments

- This poem uses a fictional style, as if telling a children’s story and begins mid-tale ‘*Then all the children...*’ The proper nouns sound fictional ‘*Cocoa Bottom...Grannie Patterson*’ which draws us into the magical moment which is described. We sense a young audience for this poem and can imagine it being read in an excited and dramatic voice, brought to life via the many verbs of movement ‘*swooped...fluttering...swaying.*’
- The event is clearly an important one since the children ‘*camped*’ and the lamps are ‘*filled with oil*’ – expectation is high. Tension and suspense are created ‘*waiting...watching...waited*’, reinforced by the alliteration.
- Descriptions are vividly colourful ‘*yellow, orange*’ and there are many references to light, natural or man-made ‘*lamps...sunset...sun...fireflies...lanterns*’. The fact that one of the older generation, Grannie Patterson, tries to surreptitiously view the event enhances its importance, since it unites all ages.
- It is ironic that the fireflies’ ‘*lanterns*’ are off since they already demonstrate the power the humans aspire to and a further irony comes from the fact that everyone is waiting for the dark to come so they can see light! Yet the fireflies, like the birds, the breeze and the bamboo lining, also anticipate this minor miracle. The personification is especially powerful here ‘*a breeze...held its breath...bamboo lining...stopped its swaying*’ as nature too heralds this new dawn and almost seems in a state of worship and thanks: ‘*bowed heads.*’ The use of onomatopoeia livens the scene ‘*tweet-a-whit*’ as this poem appeals to several of our senses, heightening the experience.
- Language is exotic: ‘*cling-klings...orange trees...bamboo lining...mongoose ferns*’.
- The rhythm of the lines and pace slow down at the end of stanza one almost to a standstill, but then increases as soon as the electricity comes on ‘*Light! Mr. Samuel smiling on the*



*verandah*' as the line lengths begin to build again, thus raising their momentum to match the excitement and enthusiasm felt by the crowd.

- Douglas successfully uses a pattern of three '*such a gasp, such a fluttering of wings...such a swaying*' as if, like humans, nature too celebrates this moment by its own natural movements.
- The poem ends, however, on a regretful note that not one who witnessed the event could record it (possibly because of lack of literacy or equipment to do so) and thus a sad element is introduced to this joyous occasion. There is a great sense of disappointment and loss: '*the moment had passed*'.

### **Other assessment opportunities**

#### **Personal and imaginative writing coursework**

Imagine you are a local journalist and have been asked to write an article for the local newspaper reporting the event (third person, past tense). It should convey the excitement of the situation and could include brief quotations from some of the characters, for example, Grannie Patterson or Mr. Samuel.

### ***Where the Scattering Began* by Merle Collins**

Merle Collins (poet, novelist, performer, lecturer) was born in 1950 on the tiny island of Grenada in the Caribbean. In 1985, Collins joined The African Dawn, a musical group which incorporated poetry and African music. This influence can be detected in her work, as her writing is often permeated by strong musical rhythms.

#### **Summary**

A complex and at times ambiguous poem, which relates the importance of maintaining cultural links and cultural identity when moving from one country to another, in this case from Africa to England, especially focusing on language and ways of communicating.

#### **Ways into the poem**

Extracts from Sujata Bhatt's poem '*Search for My Tongue*' or Moniza Alvi's '*Presents from my Aunts in Pakistan*', both about cultural identity, would work well as stimuli material since both discuss moving between cultures. (Speaking and Listening: **explore, analyse, imagine / explain, describe, narrate**)

#### **Structure and form**

A free verse poem, with minimal punctuation (mainly used mid-line) which serves to speed its pace, adding fluency to the rhythm. The repetitive, almost hypnotic phrase '*We come*' blends with the fast rhythmic pace to echo a drum beat (like the one mentioned in line 5). Line lengths vary, but are often long and complex, which reflects the poet's need to relate these important and difficult issues.

#### **Language/comments**

- Collins wastes no time in drawing our immediate attention in the first word '*Here*'. Her delivery is confident and powerful, mirrored by the determined tone of this poem.
- The title is interesting and could be interpreted in a positive light ie the metaphoric growth of a new life in a new country, but the image of '*scattering*' is clearly regretful ie the dilution of a culture.
- Group identity is strong, since the patterned repetition of the first person plural pronoun '*we*' unites them and celebrates their cultural roots.
- Connotations of language and communication dominate this poem '*call...talks...wail...mbira\*...speak...tongue...intonations...sounds*', at times linked by assonance '*call...talks*'. The poet laments '*hands that speak in ways the tongue has forgotten*' and '*tongue can find no words for asking*'. Although a body (eg face, hand, eyes, ears) and its movements can remain faithful to a culture (ie inherited features), it can be

betrayed by the failure to use the mother tongue. She highlights the immense loss that follows the disconnection of the two.

- Cross line rhymes aid the rhythm and pace ‘*Here...where*’, ‘*faces...paces*’ as does the alternate line repetition of ‘*We come*’ in the middle of the poem and frequent enjambement.
- Collins underlines the importance of remembering your homeland ‘*Ghanaian drum...wail of the mbira from Zimbabwe*’ and ‘*memory of forest sounds that we have never known*’.

A mbira\* is a musical instrument of southern Africa consisting of a set of keys or tongues attached to a resonator, which are plucked with the thumb and forefingers.

### **Links with other poems**

**Cultural identity:** This poem works extremely well with *Wherever I Hang* since there are strong similarities and differences between them. Whilst Nichols’ poem adopts the first person and projects a more personal, individual experience, Collins’ poem identifies with a group and talks more generally. Nichols blends standard English and creole grammar, whilst Collins uses only the former – yet both have a powerful rhythm. Nichols’ poem is lively, light-hearted and humorous in tone, using sarcasm ‘*Never visiting nobody Before giving them clear warning*’, and talks a great deal about both countries. Collins’ tone, however, is more serious as she discusses the loss of cultural identity when moving between cultures and mainly discusses the homeland.

### **Examination questions on the poems**

**Styles of questions:** There will be a pattern to the choice of poetry questions offered: one question will usually name a minimum of two poems, whilst the alternative question will name one poem and invite the candidate to choose another poem or poems.

**What the examiner is looking for:** Candidates will be expected to give their own personal response to the poems and use technical terms accurately and appropriately. Answers should always be supported with textual references and comments on language, form and presentational devices should be detailed. Comparison between poems is an assessment requirement for **GCSE English Literature (1213)**.

**The following could provide the basis of practice assignments for both English and English Literature. See also the *Specimen Papers and Mark Schemes* booklet.**

1. Feelings of rejection in *You Will Be Hearing From Us Shortly* and *Refugee Blues*.
2. Exploration of a child’s point of view in *Half-past Two* and ONE other poem from ***In Such a Time as This***.
3. The situations faced by the two main characters in *Half-past Two* and *Yellow*.
4. *Hide and Seek* and *Brendon Gallacher*: how the powerful mix of feelings is created in each poem.
5. How the writers’ descriptions help you picture the scenes in *War Music* and in one other poem from ***In Such a Time as This*** dealing with the experience of war.

## Collection B: *Identity*

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### Grouping possibilities

There are several ways of categorising the poems: **memories; childhood; old age; family relationships; fear; discrimination; places; female experience**. The Heaney poems work well together as memories of childhood, good, sad and fearful, while the poems by female poets illustrate shared experiences and fears, compromises and courage.

It is also useful to link and compare stylistic techniques. All but one of the poems, *At Grass*, is direct first person. Several vary the structure to create impact - see *Old Man, Old Man*; *Miracle on St David's Day* and *Mid-Term Break*, all of which have a final verse much shorter than the other verses. Two of the poems use extended metaphor, *Mirror* and *Road Not Taken*, while several use humour to drive home their message such as *Not my Best Side*, *Warning* and *I Shall Paint My Nails Red*. Other techniques used widely are repetition, onomatopoeia, simile and metaphor. Several of the poems are intensely moving and describe memories or experiences with which we can all identify.

### Seamus Heaney's poems.

Heaney is Irish, the son of a farmer. Many of his poems, as here, reflect that background and he draws upon memories of his childhood including those sad or fearful.

### *The Barn* by Seamus Heaney

#### Summary

An intense memory of a place which as a child created terror both real (rats) and imagined (the sack). The sense memories are sharp and the atmosphere terrifying.

#### Way into the poem

Do you have a memory of a place that frightened you or a fear of something real or imagined? (Speaking and Listening – *Explain, Describe, Narrate.*)

#### Structure and form

Five verses, each of four lines. The lines part-rhyme alternately and each line has the same number of syllables, ten.

#### Language/comments

- He describes what he sees ('*threshed corn*') using a simile to show us its fineness, '*grit*', and colour, '*ivory*'. Its heaviness he expresses in '*solid as cement*', an assonant simile which introduces an image which he uses in the powerful terrifying conclusion, '*two lugged sacks*'. We are used to plastic or pressed paper sacks but these would be knotted so that the top so the top corners stood up like '*lugs*', ears. He can smell the dark ('*musty*') and he personifies it as hoarding all the old tools of the now mechanised farm of the 1940s and 50s. He uses a military metaphor ('*armoury*') to refer to the ploughing implements. He uses colour ('*mouse-grey*'), touch ('*smooth*') and alliteration ('*chilly concrete*') to describe the unwelcoming barn floor. The lack of windows adds to the atmosphere, though in a contrasting beautiful image he remembers the dust as '*gilded*', touched by gold by the sunlight from the *high, narrow* slits - note the adjectives. Only *one door* implies a feeling of being trapped, but in a run-on line it also meant '*no draughts*' so that summer's heat made sure the roof '*burned like an oven*', a powerful simile. But in the darkness he could see '*bright objects*' which took shape ('*formed*') as his eyes adjusted. These are farm hand tools, a scythe, a spade, a pitch-fork, though there is menace in the sharp nouns '*edge*' and '*prongs*'. He uses the pronoun '*you*' as though to invite us to share his memory or to put the fear he felt at the remove by avoiding '*I*'. The word '*then*' signals the limits of his endurance; he escapes, but as yet he has described nothing terrifying. He uses alliteration

and hyperbole in a striking metaphor ‘*cobwebs clogging up your lungs*’ to express his inability to breathe in an atmosphere he found claustrophobic. He uses the colloquialism ‘*scuttled*’ to describe his ‘*fast*’ undignified rush to reach the yard which is ‘*sunlit*’ in contrast to the barn.

- It was in nightmares that the barn had the power to terrify him. Just as bats must have flown at night in the rafters of the barn so they fly through his troubled sleep and in the nightmare barn ‘*bright eyes stared*’. Though he does not say here to what the eyes belonged, Heaney as a child feared rats (Read his poem *Advancement of Learning*). The adjectives ‘*fierce*’ and ‘*unblinking*’ add to the sense of menace he felt.
- In the final verse he describes how the dark ‘*gulfed*’, using the noun ‘*gulf*’ as a verb to express how overwhelmingly huge the darkness felt to the boy he used to be. The simile ‘*like a roof-space*’ emphasised this and reminds us of the barn which caused these awful dreams. Suddenly he uses ‘*I*’ as though the memory intensifies and uses metaphor – himself as ‘*chaff*’, the corn husks left after threshing, at the mercy of birds which ‘*shot through the air-slits*’ (he must have seen birds do this often in the real barn). To avoid this air-borne terror he ‘*lay face-down*’ to ‘*shun*’, avoid and escape that ‘*fear*’
- The last line provides a powerful climax – in his nightmare the innocent sacks of the first verse become part of his morbid fear of rats and they ‘*moved in like great blind rats*’. The final simile uses two adjectives to express their size and their sightlessness which does not prevent them from moving in, no doubt, for the kill.
- The poem is full of telling detail acutely observed and a variety of images to express how he felt in the barn and how those feelings combined with his terror of rats became the awful substance of his nightmares as a child.
- Note how Heaney runs on verses two and three (enjambement) and the change from ‘*you*’ to the much more powerful ‘*I*’, as memory takes hold.

### **Other assessment opportunities**

#### **Speaking and Listening**

*My Worst Nightmare* (**Explain, Describe, Narrate**).

#### **Personal and imaginative writing coursework**

Descriptive writing – In detail and in first person describe a place you find frightening or strange. Use detail and build up atmosphere using appropriate and striking adjectives.

#### **Comparative ideas**

Compare Heaney’s fear here with Sylvia Plath’s fear of old age as she expresses it in *Mirror*. In that poem it is a thing – her mirror that embodies her *worst nightmare* the *terrible fish* of old age. Then you might look at *Warning* – no fear there, just joyous anticipation and a desire to shock!

### ***The Road Not Taken* by Robert Frost**

#### **Summary**

This poem is an extended metaphor. There may have been a real road which forked in an autumn wood but it is also an image of the journey through life and the decisions we make often on little or no real knowledge and which can affect us forever.

#### **Way into the poem**

Discuss the *big* choices in life. To study or not? To marry? And to whom? What work to do? Where to live? To have children?

Speaking and listening (**Explain, Describe, Narrate** and **Explore, Analyse, Imagine**)

#### **Structure and form**

The poem has four verses each of five lines of roughly equal length. The rhyme-scheme is regular: the first, third and fourth lines rhyme and the second and fifth.

## Language/comments

- The poem may have been prompted by a real road in a wood, but its appeal lies in the extended metaphor offered by the fork – which way to go? Which is best? Which decision to make? What to choose? Life is full of such dilemmas and how we choose will affect our future.
- The poem opens with a simple statement: ‘*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood*’. He is suddenly faced with a choice, and does the ‘*yellow*’ refer to an autumn wood or to his ‘*autumn*’ – was the decision one made in his middle-age? He finds the decision difficult; he is ‘*sorry*’ not to be able to experience both routes ahead but recognises the impossibility of this for a ‘*single traveller*’. Instead his decision takes time ‘*Long I stood*’ but he can only see so far before the way ahead is obscured by ‘*undergrowth*’. We none of us can see our future, the experiences which lie ahead of us.
- He looks for something to help him decide as we all do when faced with a decision, the consequences of which are unknown. He takes the ‘*other road*’, which is equally ‘*fair*’, and perhaps it seems more exciting as at first he says it ‘*wanted wear*’. Does this indicate he made a choice most people might have found more challenging? The last two lines of the second verse however tell us that it did not prove a less usual choice: both were equally used and ‘*worn*’. His first impression seems to imply that he does not want to make a common choice, he sees himself as not a follower, as more individual than that.
- He begins the third verse by stressing both are unworn – the leaves that lie upon the roads are not ‘*trodden black*’, so are both choices unusual?
- The exclamation which opens the third line indicates what we all know – it is impossible to go back in life; both we and circumstances change; a choice has its own consequences once we make it. He recognises this – ‘*way loads on to way*’ - and it is difficult both literally and metaphorically to retrace one’s steps exactly.
- He anticipates telling the story of his choice ‘*with a sigh*’ which seems to imply regret at this decision but it might be a sigh of relief – it is deliberately ambiguous. He repeats the opening line of the poems omitting only the adjective ‘*yellow*’ which provides a splash of colour in the otherwise plain poem. He ends this line with ‘*I*’ and begins the fifth with ‘*I*’, perhaps stressing that he alone is responsible both for the decision and its consequences. He has now decided that he **did** make the less usual choice – his chosen road was ‘*less travelled by*’, and it has also ‘*made all the difference*’. It is impossible to tell if this difference was for good or ill – again Frost is deliberately ambiguous. We know it affected his life/his journey greatly one way or another. The road not taken is a metaphor for all the opportunities missed in life.
- The language the poet uses is simple and everyday. It is the central image, the extended metaphor which is striking: the fork in the road representing a decision to be made. We can all identify with this.

## Other assessment opportunities

### Personal and imaginative writing coursework

It was the wrong decision and it affected my whole life

The hardest choices a person can make

### Comparative ideas

Consider other poems in the collection that describe change and the consequences of that. It might be a decision as in *Digging*, when Heaney decides not to farm but to write, or a change that occurs naturally such as ageing in *Warning*.

## ***Follower*** by Seamus Heaney

### **Summary**

A personal, autobiographical poem. Heaney describes an experience from his farming childhood on his father's then unmechanised farm. His love and admiration for his father shine through and make his present ambivalent feelings all the more sad.

### **Way into the poem**

Was life better before modern technology or worse?

**(Discuss, Argue/Persuade)**

### **Structure and form**

Each verse consists of four lines which rhyme (exactly or closely) alternately. The first five verses have a regular metre, each line having eight syllables. The last verse, to emphasise the confusion of his adult feelings towards his now old and more dependent father, has a different metre. The first, third and fourth lines have nine syllables and the second only seven.

### **Language/comments**

- The title '*Follower*' can be understood in several ways: his father following the plough, him following his father and his father in old age following him in a real and a metaphorical way. Also we all *follow* our parents in the sense that we come after them.
- He remembers a scene rare now even in rural Ireland, a horse-drawn plough. The poem is direct, opening with reference to its subject '*my father*'. His father's strength is expressed in the verb '*globed*' to describe his wide, rounded shoulders, tensed to guide the plough through the reins. His skill and ease of movement are suggested by the rest of the simile '*like a full sail strung*' just as a ship in full sail moves swiftly and well. The '*s*' alliteration emphasises the smooth movement. Using such a plough he walked behind the horse within the shafts controlling the straightness of the furrow it ploughed. The horses responded with greater effort, they '*strained*' as he used '*clicking*', an onomatopoeic word to keep them right.
- Two words, '*an expert*', record Heaney's pride in his father's skill. He arranged perfectly the '*wing*' and steel tipped sock of the plough, the arm and blade that do the cutting and turning of the earth. The '*sod*', the turned earth, formed a perfect roll and lay unbroken. As he reached the end of the field with only enough space left to turn the horses '*at the headrig*', his father only needed to '*pluck*' the reins once to turn the team of horses '*sweating*' with their hard work. The word '*pluck*' implies a gentle movement; he does not need to pull or force his horses. Once turned he '*mapped*' the next furrow, eyes '*narrowed*' and '*angled*' looking at the ground. The three verbs underline his skill further and his concentration on his task.
- The word '*I*' begins the next three verses as Heaney remembers his childhood. He uses the verb '*stumbled*' to describe his childish clumsiness as he followed his father who wore heavy work boots '*hob-nailed*' to strengthen the soles and stop them wearing out. He remembers falling in his on the '*polished sod*', a metaphor to express the appearance of the cleanly sliced soil. He remembers sometimes '*riding*' on his father's back and as in horse-riding going up and down to his father's steady steps, his '*plod*'.
- The penultimate verse begins again with *I* as he writes about his childhood ambition to follow in his father's footsteps and *plough* as he did, measuring each furrow with one closed eye and stiffening his arm to keep the plough straight. He remembers doing nothing else ('*all I ever did*') but *follow* his father's '*broad shadow*' wherever he went on the farm and the adjective *broad* implies his father's physical stature and his importance in his son's life.
- He remembers himself as in his father's way ('*I was a nuisance*'). He uses three verbs, '*tripping*, *falling*, *yapping*', the last one onomatopoeic to describe his behaviour. The word '*but*' signifies a change; in the present '*today*' the roles are reversed and his father '*keeps stumbling/behind me*'. Is this literal or metaphorical? Does his father stumbling with age

now fall behind his son, or is it guilt? Does he feel as though his father is always behind perhaps because he took up the pen not a plough? (Look at ‘*Digging*’ for similar thoughts).

- This is an affectionate poem, a tribute to skills now gone from almost all farms and a tribute to the love and admiration he felt for his father. The poem ends on a sad note, the ‘*expert*’ of his childhood, powerful and skilful, is now ‘*stumbling*’ and in fact or imagination haunts his son and follows the boy, now grown, who followed him.
- So who is the ‘*follower*’ of the title?

### **Other assessment opportunities**

#### **Personal and imaginative writing coursework**

*My Favourite Childhood Memory/ies*

#### **Comparative ideas**

Family relationships – Any Heaney poem here (except *Death of A Naturalist*) *Old Man, Old Man, Once Upon A Time*. Look at the ways Heaney (and/or the other poets) remember their parents and how their relationships have changed, even sometimes reversed. In the case of *Once Upon A Time* the father envies his son the openness and honesty he once had before a different culture forced him to conform to behaviour he found hypocritical and false.

### ***Miracle on St David’s Day* by Gillian Clarke**

#### **Summary**

A moving poem describing the poet’s visit to an institution for the mentally ill to help them celebrate St David’s Day. A man whose illness made him stop communicating and become dumb suddenly recites Wordsworth’s *The Daffodils*. This is the miracle of the title.

#### **Way Into the poem**

What would you describe as a miracle? (Speaking and Listening – ***Explore/Analyse/Imagine***)

Why do you think the mentally ill used to be locked away, whether dangerous or not? (Speaking and Listening – ***Discuss/Argue/Persuade***)

#### **Structure and form**

Each verse has five lines, except the eighth which has three in order to emphasise the stunned reaction of his audience and the beauty of the setting. The metre is irregular though the lines are of roughly the same length. It is unrhymed.

#### **Language/comments**

- The poem opens with a quotation from William Wordsworth’s poem ‘*The Daffodils*’ written about the daffodils in the Lake District. This flower is also the emblem of Wales, whose patron saint is St David. Wordsworth is saying that we not only see but also absorb through our ‘*inward eye*’ the beauty of nature.
- The poem begins with a strong image, a metaphor describing a ‘*yellow*’ afternoon which is personified as ‘*open-mouthed*’. The image reflects the colour and shape of the trumpet-shaped flowers in the sunshine. The sun, also personified, ‘*treads*’ among the trees. The scene reminds the poet of a house in the country, rich enough to employ gardeners whose ‘*rumps*’ stick up among the bushes while the house-guests enjoy the gardens.
- The first line of verse two is a harsh statement of fact – it is not a country house but an asylum for the ‘*insane*’, the mentally ill. The writer is there to read poetry to them. She refers to four specific patients. The first, an old woman, interrupts her reading to offer her ‘*buckets of coal*’, a reminder here that Wales once had many mining communities. In contrast a ‘*beautiful chestnut-haired*’ boy listens intently yet later she is told he is schizophrenic, but this was one of his ‘*good*’ days. Using a metaphor to describe the effect of the sunlight coming in through the barred windows is a woman in ‘*neat clothes*’ who

though present is 'absent' in every way but physically. The repetition of 'not' stresses the isolation of the woman, unaware of her senses of hearing, sight and touch.

- Finally a 'big, mild man' is led 'tenderly', gently in to hear her. The bald statement 'he has never spoken' is shocking. His hands too must be large and bear the scars of his former work. They are 'labourer's hands'. He sits placidly, hands on knees, but 'rocks gently' feeling the rhythm of her poetry. To underline the atmosphere, she tells us that she reads to their 'presences, absences' using an oxymoron to underline their physical presence yet mental absence. She repeats the word 'big' to describe the man and adds the adjective 'dumb' to emphasise his inability or choice not to speak.
- Line 21 shocks us. This verse has not run on from the last, highlighting the sudden change of mood and atmosphere. Using 's' alliteration she stresses his sudden movement, again referring to his size ('huge') and in spite of the fact that he still looks mild she says 'I feel afraid'. She uses two beautiful images of change to express his sudden speech: 'slow/movement of spring water' and 'first bird/of the year in breaking darkness'. She likens the sudden beauty of his voice to the gentle flow of fresh water from deep underground or the first dawn song of spring. The poem that breaks his 'darkness' is *The Daffodils*, that image of new life and beauty and spring.
- The nurses are 'stunned', metaphorically 'frozen', unable to move yet 'afraid' in case he becomes agitated or even dangerous. His voice so long unused is 'hoarse' but he has remembered the poem perfectly. Appropriately and movingly he speaks against the background of the asylum's carpet of daffodils which are 'still', a word she repeats for emphasis. Using a simile she compares them to 'wax' as though preserved, and she cannot estimate the number, just as Wordsworth said they are a 'host'. She quotes from Wordsworth again: 'their syllables unspoken', they are silent but the man 'huge and mild' speaks for and about them.
- The poet guesses that as a child 'forty years ago' in a school in the Welsh valleys the children learned poems by repeating them aloud – 'by rote'. For the first time since his unhappiness/depression made him retreat into himself so that in his 'dumbness of misery' he ceased to speak, her poetry has somehow awakened his pleasure in what she calls the 'music of speech'. He has 'remembered' he once 'had something to say'.
- In the last verse of only three lines there is that moment of silence before applause which is always a real tribute to the speaker. Using metaphor she refers to this as 'the flowers' silence', reminding us of the setting and the subject of the poem he recited. As though nature joined in the tribute a thrush began to sing and using assonance and metaphor 'the daffodils are flame', as though their colour grew stronger.
- This is a moving poem. It says much about those society writes off, probably most especially the mentally ill. It reminds us of the power of memory and the capacity of the human spirit to revive. Remember that the Welsh are lovers and makers of music and since pre-Christian times poets.
- Saints like St David become saints because they perform miracles; that is, believers pray to them for help in sickness for instance, and a cure that cannot be medically explained is a 'miracle'. Here it is appropriate that on St David's day the dumb man speaks and he recites *The Daffodils*, and daffodils are worn in Wales to celebrate St David's Day.

### **Other assessment opportunities**

#### **Non-fiction writing**

*Prejudice* (include or concentrate on attitudes to the mentally ill).

#### **Personal and imaginative writing coursework**

*An Everyday Miracle*

#### **Comparative ideas**

Look at other poems in the collection which are about the enduring power of childhood memories, whether positive as this was or not. You might consider *Follower*, *The Barn*, *Old Man*, *Old Man* or *Once Upon A Time*.



In terms of the power of human beings to rise above dreadful pain and sadness you might look at *Still I Rise* By Maya Angelou.

## ***Old Man, Old Man*** by U A Fanthorpe

### **Summary**

A personal, probably autobiographical poem describing a father, difficult, moody and detached, who has become a helpless, dependent old man. Her feelings are complex but her final desire to be of help seems genuine and moving.

### **Way into the poem**

Use your own experiences of relationships with family, friends, even teachers to show how they can change for the better. (**Explain/Describe/Narrate – Explore/Analyse/Imagine**).

### **Structure and form**

The first ten of the eleven verses have three unrhymed lines of similar length, and the final two line verse expresses by its difference her new affection for her difficult father.

### **Language/comments**

- The title repeats '*Old man*' as we might say '*Oh dear! Oh dear!*' It emphasises age but also sounds pitying of the subject who once had been adept, good at DIY. Now even opening bottles, perhaps of pills, he finds them '*recalcitrant*', difficult to control, and their labels '*tacky*', a colloquialism underlining their stickiness.
- The verb '*shamble*' is used to describe his clumsy movements. As his sight is failing he needs '*clues*' to help him find things but he misses them and feels upset when he loses his tools (*the hammer*).
- The third verse describes in metaphorical terms the '*lifelong*' power he once had over his surroundings, as he altered them to his satisfaction. He was '*Lord*' of a domain, '*shed, garage and garden*', a humorous image in one way but sad in relation to his present condition. In each place he kept the appropriate tools (*tackle*) yet now he cannot locate his hammer.
- Line ten is also humorous, using hyperbole to describe him as a '*world authority*' and a '*connoisseur*' of '*nuts/and bolts*', as another person might be of wine! But his daughter, the poet, feels he was better at DIY than with his daughters, striking a sad autobiographical note.
- In contrast she uses a colloquial expression (*a dab hand*) to describe his skills with electric tools '*Black and Decker*'. Now very old '*in your nineties*' he is '*self-demoted*'. He has decided, or his failing strength and sight have decided for him, that he must now do jobs he regarded as less important such as '*washing up*' and even doing that badly, leaving the plates with '*crusted streaks of food*', not a pleasant image. She wonders if he ceased to tell jokes because he cannot remember them or she implies because he no longer finds much funny. He forgets the cigarettes he is still allowed and which are now '*timetabled*', perhaps for his health or perhaps because it is one thing he can still control.
- In verse seven she observes that he can no longer be bothered to watch television or perhaps if he does to be put in a bad mood (*surliness*) by it. Now he can hardly see it and now his wife could change the pictures on the walls, putting back the photographs of their children who for some reason he '*disinherited*'. That word and '*surliness*' imply he was a difficult, even unkind husband and father, perhaps too controlling.
- Now he would not know whatever was changed in his surroundings – he who formerly controlled his environment so carefully. But in the present '*now*' he is even lost in his thoughts and speech. She uses the word '*ramble*' to describe his confusion as he talks about London and cannot remember how to get from '*Holborn*' to '*Soho*'.
- The next verse opens with a question about the location of Drury Lane which further underlines his state of mind. The repetition of the title is both what he is and an expression of her pity and perhaps her exasperation. He is still '*obdurate*', stubborn, and sure his view

is correct even though age, infirmity and blindness have made his world smaller, 'contracted' it. He does not even see light fully, he lives in 'the almost dark'.

- He says to her:

*I can see you/..., but only as a cloud.*

He sees her not as she is but as unsubstantial, formless, a shape not a person, his sight is so poor, but also perhaps because of his increasing detachment from real life. As she leaves he is distressed and tries not to show his tears. She says she loves the contrast between his present 'helplessness' and his hatred of being so. These lines seem bitter yet the final verse contradicts the impression that now he is not in control she can at last love him.

- In the final verse, only two lines long to emphasise its message, she offers to help him. Never allowed to help as a child she now in reality or in wish offers to find his missing hammer. She wants to walk with him to Drury Lane. She ends ambiguously 'I am only a cloud' as though in that form she can no longer irritate him or be irritated by him.
- Although the poem ends kindly if sadly it describes a poor relationship between a father and daughter, a father not loving or close but difficult and pre-occupied with his own narrow interests. Now old age and infirmity have made him need others and she, once 'disinherited', to uncover a closeness they never had. The repetition of 'let me' ... in the final two lines emphasises her desire for a closeness they have never had.

### **Other assessment opportunities**

#### **Personal and imaginative writing coursework**

Write a piece about relationships between generations within a family, real or imagined.

#### **Non-fiction writing**

The problems of old age or the problems of the young.

### **Comparative ideas**

Contrast this poem with Heaney's *Follower*. He worshipped his skilled father but the main difference is his father shared his time with him, gladly in spite of his *yapping*. Both poems express ambivalence at the end as each child finds ageing has changed their former relationship with their father. Discuss this ambivalence and explore what each adult poet now feels.

### ***At Grass* by Philip Larkin**

#### **Summary**

The poet observes two once successful race horses in their retirement meadow. He speculates as to whether they remember their 'glory days', but as the poem draws to a close he appears to conclude that memories or not, their lives now are joyful, peaceful and contented.

#### **Way Into the poem**

Should animals be exploited for sport?

What happens to celebrities once their fame has passed?

(Speaking and Listening)

#### **Structure and form**

A regular verse form: in each verse line one rhymes with line four and line three with line six. Line two and five rhyme or part rhyme. The poem also has a regular rhythm, each line having eight syllables. This steady metre and enjambement between verses suit the reflective mood of the poem.

#### **Language/comments**

- The title *At Grass* means retirement.
- Larkin finds it difficult to see the horses who stand in 'cold shade' out of the sun. He uses the verb 'distresses' to describe the wind's effect on their manes and tails, perhaps a pun on 'tress'. One of the two horses 'crops', eats grass, moving, while the writer speculates that the other watches this, spectating, almost an echo of their past. When the moving horse stops he describes it as 'anonymous' - anonymous now but once its name was well known.

- He tells us that ‘*fifteen years ago perhaps*’ twenty four races, he calls them ‘*distances*’ as horse races vary in length, were enough (‘*sufficed*’) to ‘*fable them*’, to make them into legends. The memory is ‘*faint*’ now, fifteen years is a long time in racing terms. He lists three types of races that resulted in the names becoming legendary. He uses a metaphor from craft work, their names ‘*artificed to inlay faded*’ on cups and plaques.
- ‘*Classic Junes*’, the time of the great classic flat races, leads to an evocation of typical race meetings, the ladies’ parasols giving the description a dated, nostalgic air. In the car park wait ‘*squadrons*’ of cars, a military metaphor to express their number. It is hot and the grass is ‘*littered*’, also showing us the number of race-goers. He goes then to the end of the race, ‘*the long cry*’ of triumph or disappointment or admiration seeming to ‘*hang*’ in the air and then to be reflected in the urgent racing pages of the newspapers.
- He opens the fourth verse with a rhetorical question – using an appropriate simile he asks if just as flies ‘*plague*’ horses’ ears are the horses also tormented by memories of their fame? Are they shaking their heads in denial or to chase the flies or memories? Using metaphor he compares the coming darkness (‘*dusk*’) filling the shadows, brimming them. A few summers of racing success and those memories quietly disappeared, ‘*stole away*’. They forget waiting in the starting gates, watched by crowds whose ‘*cries*’ encouraged them. Now nothing bothers them, the retirement meadows are ‘*unmolesting*’ but their names, as winners, live on in yearly racing records.
- Larkin runs on the last word of the fourth verse reflecting his next image: ‘*they/have slipped their names*’, left their famous names behind just as they ‘*slipped*’ the starting gates at the start of a race or ‘*slipped*’ their tackle when they finished their race. Now, like soldiers ordered to assume a relaxed position, they stand ‘*at ease*’ and now when they gallop he speculates it must be for ‘*joy*’, no longer to win. Unlike at race meetings no one watches them through ‘*field glasses*’ as they race ‘*home*’, no one records their speed at the gallop. Now only the stable groom who looks after them and his ‘*stable boy*’ come for them to lead them into their stables for the night. Their only tackle now are ‘*bridles*’ – they need no bits or saddles.
- This is a well-observed, reflective poem. Time passes, fame passes but for those horses being ‘*at grass*’ has its own pleasures and the poet contrasts the noise and strains of their working life with the peace and ‘*joy*’ of their retirement. It is as if their former fame is something separate from them, and now they are anonymous and unnoticed. There are obvious parallels with the nature of celebrity.

### Other assessment opportunities

#### Personal and imaginative writing coursework

Memories – real or imagined

#### Comparative ideas

This poem is quite unlike any of the others in *Identity* in that it is not written in the first person and the subjects are animals. However it is about memory so it might usefully be compared with *Miracle on St David’s Day* or any of Heaney’s poems.

You might also like to look at *Not My Best Side* for insights into an unusual situation.

*Warning* too might provide fruitful discussions – the woman, unremarkable in youth, plans for herself a much more startling old age. The experience of early fame and peaceful horse retirement reverses this process.

#### Examination questions on the poems

**Styles of questions:** There will be a pattern to the choice of poetry questions offered: one question will usually name a minimum of two poems, whilst the alternative question will name one poem and invite the candidate to choose another poem or poems.

**What the examiner is looking for:** Candidates will be expected to give their own personal response to the poems and use technical terms accurately and appropriately. Answers should always be supported with textual references and comments on language, form and presentational devices should be detailed. Comparison between poems is an assessment requirement for **GCSE English Literature (1213)**.

The following could provide the basis of practice assignments for both *English* and *English Literature*. See also the *Specimen Papers and Mark Schemes* booklet

1. Child's point of view in *Mid-Term Break* and *The Barn*.
2. Exploration of old age in *Warning* and *Old Man, Old Man*.
3. Cultural pressures in *Still I Rise* and *Once Upon a Time*.
4. Use of extended metaphors in *Mirror* and *The Road Not Taken*.

## Collection C: *Nature*

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### Approaches to teaching the collection

#### Grouping possibilities

Man's relationship with nature is a clear theme linking the majority of these poems, but this can be subdivided into the following classifications: **Man versus nature**; **Man's re-evaluation of nature**; **Man's fascination with animals**; **Nature as a source of emotions/ideas** and the power of **natural phenomena**. **Family relationships** and **the creative writing process** (inspired by elements of nature) are also under scrutiny in pairs or groups of poems.

There are common poetic features to be found in several poems. **Symbolism** can link poems which on a first glance appear to have little in common (*Mushrooms*, *Keeping Orchids*, *Break of Day in the Trenches*). The fluidity of **enjambement**, coupled with **long sentences** spilling over into two or more verses (or extended stanzas as in *The Storm*), enhance the moments of drama and tension in *The Thought-Fox* and *Wind*. **Personification** heightens the superhuman strength of *Wind* and *The Storm* whilst it encourages us to sympathise with the stag in the final stanzas of that poem, adding a deep sense of **pathos**. **The present tense** reinforces the immediacy of several poems or parts of poems. In *Trout* and *The Five Students* it depicts the urgency of the journeys described, whilst the overnight growth of *Mushrooms* is central to the poem's symbolism and the final seven lines of *Wind* build suspense and heighten the sense of danger. **Onomatopoeia** is strong in *Wind*, *Thistles* and *The Storm*, aptly conveying their vociferous power. **Turning points** are common to *Roe-Deer*, *The Stag* and *The Horses* which allow the poets to view events from another angle. **Unusual word combinations** enrich the poetry of Hughes ('*dawn-dirty*, *blue-dark*') and Hardy ('*foot-folk*').

**Jackie Kay** (for relevant biographical notes see *In Such a Time as This*)

#### *Keeping Orchids* by Jackie Kay

##### Summary

The central character in this poem (presumably female due to the nature of the mother's gift) recalls the first meeting with her real mother and struggles to keep the memory alive, possibly even retracing her steps to the very meeting place in a desperate bid to recreate that moment. The reunion has clearly had an important impact on her and she feels anguish and frustration at its transient nature, especially as it appears she was illegitimate and her mother went on to have a 'legitimate' daughter. The orchids her mother gave her become a symbol of that time and her feelings towards them are ambivalent.

##### Ways into the poem

- Should an adopted child be allowed to meet his/her natural birth mother? Discuss reasons for and against.
- An adopted boy/girl is to meet his/her real mother for the first time. Where, when and with whom? Should they be alone, in adopted parents' house or on neutral territory? Role-play the possible outcomes.

##### Structure and form

The poem consists of fourteen two-line stanzas and one single-line final stanza. The last line is deliberately incomplete, separated and alone – mirroring her own feelings as the meeting has raised questions about her true identity. Free verse allows her thoughts to form on the page, jumping from memory to meeting, making sense of this difficult moment in her life.

### Language/comments

- **The present tense** dominates this poem giving it a sense of directness and gravity. Even the flashbacks to the meeting use the present tense *'fold and unfold'* as if in a frantic bid to keep the moment alive.
- **Time** is significant. Repetition of *'twelve days later'* directly links in each case to physical contact with her mother: the giving of flowers and the holding of hands. However, the repetition of *'Twice since'* is ambiguous as on one occasion it has positive connotations, re-enacting the day itself *'I carried them back'*, yet the other employs negative, almost violent language such as the onomatopoeic *'crashed'* and *'soaking'*. *'Unprovoked'* is an odd adjective to use in this context and is usually connected with anger – which perhaps hints at a violent outburst, since it is unlikely the vase would fall over twice of its own accord! As the orchids have come to represent her mother in her mind, she therefore takes her frustration at the whole situation out on them which conveys her mixed feelings towards them/her mother.
- Internal rhyme/words resound into each other *'face fading'* and *'hold/fold...unfold'*. Kay echoes and repeats words for powerful effect throughout the poem eg *'closed'* and *'secret'*. *'Closed'* is repeated five times with its synonym *'shut'* conveying her deep sense of isolation at being excluded from her mother's life for all those years. We are reminded of the hands of both characters, especially the mother's as *'my mother's hands are all I have'* metaphorically reflect the memory of her touch, that short-lived physical contact which although initially welcoming, later becomes uncomfortable *'awkward and hard to hold'*.
- Images of childbirth/motherhood are striking. The simile *'like a baby in a shawl'* is apt, heavily ironic and subtly critical as it suggests how precious the orchids are to her, yet recalls the lack of protectiveness she felt as a baby from her own mother. *'All the broken waters'* is effectively abrupt in length, a cruel reminder of her own entry into the world as her mother's waters broke, again ironic as they contain that special chemical bond between mother and child which was to be prematurely broken.
- Listed, in a casual manner, among the visual clothing memories of her mother is *'A digital watch her daughter was wearing when she died'*. This confuses the reader and seems out of place – we have suddenly been informed of a biographical detail that we struggle to make sense of, in the same way that she is trying to make sense of the meeting. The alliteration and matter-of-fact tone keeps drawing us back to this line as we grasp the slight jealous emphasis with which it is delivered. Notice the use of *'her daughter'* rather than *'my sister'* – their two worlds are kept separate. The fact that her mother wants a constant physical reminder of her dead daughter from her legitimate family only serves to intensify her pain and feelings of rejection, resentment and bitterness that she was illegitimate: *'hidden album'*. Clearly she feels the other daughter was so important that the mother still wants to wear her watch, which is profoundly distressing for her.
- The rhythms of the poem are skilfully varied. Short, staccato statements such as *'Compressed. Airtight'* contrast with longer rhythmic units. These one word sentences are suggestive of the barrier her mother has put around herself; she delivers *'the story of her life'* letting nothing in or out.
- The metaphoric *'bag of tricks'* is mocking and sarcastic in tone, as if her mother can magically make everything better by showing her photos or letters. *'Love letters'* suggest an illicit love affair and imply she was born illegitimately.
- The closing line puts us ill-at-ease *'cutting the stems with a sharp knife'* as the hint of violence in the culmination of *'boiling...cutting...sharp knife'* appears pleasurable for her, an almost sick enjoyment. It is at this final point in the poem where the symbolism of the flowers is heightened and we feel the threat towards her mother for the anguish, turmoil and suffering she attributes to her absence. She too is like an orchid – precious and loved by her adopted family, but lacking roots, something exotic and out of place.

### Other assessment opportunities

#### Speaking and Listening

Interview with the mother or daughter after this episode expanding on clues given in poem, such as how each thought the meeting went. (*explain, describe, narrate*).

### Personal and imaginative writing coursework

- Diary entry/letter to a friend after the meeting, from daughter's or mother's point of view.
- Script Writing – you have been commissioned to write a short play about an adopted girl's first meeting with her mother. Using the poem as your starting point for information, write a two act play in which you detail their meeting in the first act and a monologue of either's thoughts and feelings in the second act.
- Giving up the Child - dramatic monologue as the mother makes her decision all those years ago.

### Comparative ideas

*Keeping Orchids* works well with *Nettles* and *The Flowers*, as each discusses the relationship between parent and child. Another link could be made with *A Blade of Grass*, as in the same way the orchids provoke some negative feelings and a sense of divide between the daughter and the mother, so does the blade of grass between the two voices in Patten's poem. Just as the fox is a catalyst for thought in Hughes' poem, so too are the orchids in Kay's poem.

### *The Horses* by Edwin Muir

#### Summary

Muir's famous apocalyptic poem finds hope in looking beyond the appalling catastrophe of a nuclear war. It even glimpses gain in the destruction of the 'old bad world' by forcing man to re-evaluate his relationship with nature and form new bonds, whilst turning his back on the mechanisation that in part led to the horror.

#### Way into the poem

Imagine living in the aftermath of a nuclear war – give a seven day account of what you see, hear, smell and touch, making your language as descriptive as possible. Think carefully about the tone of your response. (Speaking and Listening: *explain, describe, narrate*).

After studying the poem, this activity could also be used for a piece of Personal and Imaginative Writing Coursework. Students could produce two sets of diary entries, using one young and one old narrator, which would allow varying perspectives on the disaster.

#### Structure and form

Free verse suits the sombre, confessional narrative. Verse divisions are undefined in places, blurring boundaries, reminiscent of the blur that exists between the horrific reality of the nightmarish aftermath of war and the surreal, yet hopeful, arrival of the 'strange horses'.

#### Language/comments

- Old Testament biblical connotations are striking in the first stanza. The allusion to the creation of the world in seven days is ironically paralleled by its seven day destruction. Antithesis of 'life' and 'death' exists in the deliberate contrast between God's production of vegetation ('seed-bearing plants' and trees 'that bear fruit with seeds') on the third day in the Book of Genesis and Muir's recollection of that same day 'dead bodies piled on the deck'. Religious references are also found in 'covenant' and 'Eden'.
- The tone of this poem is initially sad and sombre, with a glimmer of light at the end. Images of death and destruction are in abundance. The 'dead bodies piled' are made to sound like pieces of rubbish, strewn aside carelessly, inhumanely and overwhelming in number. The alliterative 'plane plunged' stresses the senseless waste of human life.
- The fear and dislike felt towards the radio voice that might speak is expressed through the sibilance of 'still...stand...corners...kitchens...perhaps...rooms'. This animosity is elevated by the two powerful patterns of three employed 'if they should speak...if...they should speak...if...they should speak' which is counteracted by 'We would not listen...we would not...We would not'. The haunting repetition of 'if...if...if' builds the momentum of the

stanza and adds optimism, only to be deflated by the negative and anticlimactic ‘*we would not*’.

- Muir adds a euphemistic touch to the personification ‘*war that put the world to sleep*’. Likewise ‘*that bad old world that swallowed its children quick at one great gulp*’ uses fairy-tale language. Both initially appear out of place considering the complexity and seriousness of the subject matter.
- The arrival of the horses provides a positive turning point as they symbolise strength and hope in a world severely lacking both. There is an immense sense of gratitude at the poem’s close, as man deserved to be rejected by the horses he once rejected or moved on from, but is instead saved by them: ‘*their coming our beginning*’.

### Comparative ideas

The subject of battle spans many poems in this collection, whether private or public. *The Horses* compares well with *Wind*, *Thistles* and *Nettles*. The optimistic ending of *The Horses* compares well with that of *Mushrooms* as both have a reawakened feeling of self-belief. Hughes’ *Roe-Deer* appears to invite man in the same way the horses appear to in Muir’s poem. Admiration for the horses is also echoed in Nichols’ fascination for the iguana and Heaney’s awe of the trout. Muir’s criticisms of so-called ‘civilised’ human behaviour are to be found in Hughes’ *The Stag*. The surreal element of *The Horses* when the ‘*strange horses*’ arrive is similar to Hughes’ unearthly, momentary encounter with the *Roe-Deer* and the supernatural feel that pervades *The Thought-Fox*.

### *The Flowers* by Selima Hill

#### Summary

The poem is told from a mother’s perspective and recounts a visit to her father’s grave, led by her daughter. There is a suggestion of a rift between the mother and her dead father, as the grave is neglected and the visit is clearly initiated by the daughter. This poignant episode reopens painful emotions in the mother – she feels awkward and clumsy at the graveside, hesitant and uncomfortable.

#### Way into the poem

When a loved one passes away, there is often a sense of regret that we did not take the opportunity to tell them how we really felt about them. Yet if the relationship was in any way a negative one, the chance is lost to ‘put things right’. Imagine a mother and son did not speak for many years due to a family argument. Upon her death, he attends her funeral and gives a speech in which he reveals what he wished he had said why she was alive, linking it to the reason for their dispute. (Speaking and Listening: **explain, describe, narrate**).

#### Structure and form

A three stanza narrative poem with a symmetry in line numbers, 8, 10, 8. Free verse is used which is fitting to the apparent spontaneity of the visit. The first verse is one sentence long, drawing us into the story.

#### Language/comments

- An unusual reversal of power roles is established in stanza one with the simile ‘*like a little dog*’ suggesting fidelity, as if the mother is reluctant to go and therefore needs to be led. Interestingly, she refers to her own father as ‘her grandfather’ which clearly distances herself from him as she refrains from labelling her own relationship with him. In stanza two the grave is referred to as one ‘*she had been caring for*’ – the absence of the first person pronoun is strikingly noticeable here, since it lacks her own personal involvement. Images of neglect are rife, enhanced by the ‘*nettles...moss*’ that have been allowed to wildly adorn the grave. Ironically the deliberate focus on the daughter’s involvement with the grandfather speaks volumes about her own.
- The daughter has taken an active role, reflected in the many verbs suggestive of movement ‘*picked...piled...rode...cleared...dug...arranged...scraped*’. It seems evident the daughter’s



relationship was a great deal closer than her own. The contrast between the daughter's positive, happy and energetic movements and the mother's slow, apathetic ones is sharply defined. A sense of smell and touch surrounds the daughter's actions '*picked handfuls of the wild flowers...piled...wild parsley*'. We can imagine the mother as an observer, unsure of her own movements, feeling helpless. These feelings link to the grandfather's condition in his dying days '*too old to help her*'.

- The unfamiliar situation the mother finds herself in has stirred her emotions, as she is unsure how to act around the grave and feels awkward when it is time to leave '*I hesitated*'. The inclusion of direct speech from her daughter wakes her from her reverie and again guides her via the imperative '*Come on*'.
- '*It's finished now*' is highly ironic and ambiguous, as although the physical job of tending to the grave is complete, it seems the memories and thoughts of her relationship with her own father have only just begun and are far from over.
- The trip has at least produced one union '*our bicycles*'. The ride back '*moving apart...coming together*' could metaphorically describe the spiritual and mental journey they both take in life, at times '*together*' like the trip to the grave, at others '*apart*' as in the reflections and memories that the visit has provoked in her. Possibly, one of the '*ruts*' she refers to in the final line is to understand and make sense of the relationship she had with her father, therefore ending the poem on a poignant note.

### **Other assessment opportunities**

#### **Personal and imaginative writing coursework**

Descriptive Writing: Using the first person narrative, write the mother's diary entries for the two days following the graveside visit which detail the thoughts and feelings that have been reawakened in her, and describe the relationship she had with her father. Additionally, the entries could span three generations by comparing her present relationship with her daughter and the one with her own father.

### ***Nettles*** by Vernon Scannell

#### **Summary**

A father wages war on the nettles that have stung his three year old son in their garden. He compares the nettles to an army of soldiers and engages in a battle to overcome them. The victory was short-lived however, as they reappear two weeks later.

#### **Ways into the poem**

- Speaking and Listening Debate: Parents are overprotective and interfere too much in the lives of their adolescent children. (*discuss, argue, persuade*)
- All parents protect their children, but the nature of that protection changes as the child grows into an adolescent and then an adult eg from holding his hand as they cross the road to giving advice on talking to strangers to giving advice about a mortgage. Discuss the many different forms of protection a parent will give his child from birth to puberty to adulthood.

#### **Structure and form**

A sixteen line, one stanza poem. The alternate rhyme scheme and iambic pentameter maintain the regimented, battle-like atmosphere. Scannell uses many monosyllabic words to aid the pace of the poem, which are especially effective in places, as '*With sobs and tears*' expertly portrays a child's breathlessness when trying to recount an upset.

#### **Language/comments**

- The poem is littered with military terminology '*spears...regiment...parade...recruits*' as the father uses an extended metaphor to describe the nettles and their cruel intentions.

- There is a clear contrast between the fierceness of the nettles and the vulnerability of the boy, as their ‘*spears*’ and ‘*spite*’ suggest violence and harm compared to the boy’s ‘*sobs and tears*’ and ‘*tender skin*’.
- The alliterative ‘*blisters beaded*’ visually recalls a nettle sting, and the metaphoric ‘*watery grin*’ aptly describes his tear-stained face. It is important for the father that his son witnesses his revenge, as it is only when the boy appears to have cheered up and stopped crying that he begins his attack on the nettles ‘*And then I took my billhook*’. The attack is angry and ferocious ‘*slashed in fury*’, with the hyperbolic ‘*funeral pyre*’ and ‘*fallen dead*’ cementing his victory.
- The tense change from past to future in the final line ‘*would often feel sharp wounds again*’ opens up the message of the poem. The metaphor could be applied to the pain involved in growing up in general and a father’s desire to protect his son throughout his life.

## ***A Blade of Grass*** by Brian Patten

### **Summary**

A humorous poem relating a two-way exchange, possibly between two lovers, where one person is persistently asking for a poem to be written, whilst the poet adamantly refuses, instead offering ‘*A Blade of Grass*’. Patten’s poem makes us re-evaluate nature around us and encourages us to admire one of its more simple offerings, which in itself is ‘poetic’, rather than strive to create an aesthetically pleasing poem that could be perceived as forced and artificial if it does not develop naturally. It opens the debate: what is a poem? Ironically of course, the penned dispute creates a poem! Importantly, Patten points out that the older we get, the more cynical we become, and a blade of grass no longer appears romantic or acceptable as a token, as it might have done in our youth when we tend to believe more in abstract concepts.

### **Way into the poem**

Speaking and Listening: giving and receiving presents

- Do you like surprises?
- What makes a good present: originality? thoughtfulness? value? effort?  
How do you cope with the disappointment over a present received?

### **Structure and form**

Six stanzas with four lines per verse, except in the final three line stanza where the real reason for non-acceptance of the grass is revealed: cynicism in old age. The poem adopts the form of a conversation narrated by the poet, written in the present tense for more instantaneous effect, with several short lines, adding to the fast-paced and heated nature of the exchange.

### **Language/comments**

- Patten employs simple, everyday language which makes the argument more realistic and believable. The surface simplicity and humour are deceptive, as we ponder the serious nature of what constitutes a poem and how our views might change as we mature.
- The battle that develops is aided by the constant repetition of ‘*You*’ and ‘*I*’, like a verbal tennis match on the page. The two voices we hear are very different, as the ‘*you*’ appears abrupt, demanding and critical in its delivery ‘*You ask*’ and is threaded together by negatives ‘*not...not...not quite...too easy...absurd*’ whereas the ‘*I*’ comes across as patient, polite and accommodating ‘*And so I write you*’. Ironically there is a beautifully lyrical line about the blade of grass within the poem as it metaphorically ‘*dressed itself in frost*’.
- Echoes and repetitions feature heavily which are reflective of a dispute that both sides want to win, as ‘*grass*’ is even repeated nine times. There are several one sentence lines which maintain the momentum of a conversation. The poet himself perhaps feels that poems can be unnaturally forced and fabricated, promoting the blade of grass as ‘*more immediate than any image*’ he himself could make. In the final stanza the poet distinguishes between the ongoing grass/poem debate and the real issue as he sees it: unwillingness to accept in old age what you might have accepted in youth: a loss of spontaneity and simplicity.

## ***The Storm*** by Theodore Roethke

### **Summary**

Narrative poem detailing the storm's destructive path. The elements within nature are fighting themselves as we witness the contest between the wind from the sea and mountain. The storm unites all living creatures, as man, animal and insect run for cover.

### **Way into the poem**

Speaking and Listening: ask students about their memories of fierce storms, either at home or abroad, and describe the damage they can do. (*explain, describe, narrate*)

### **Structure and form**

A seven stanza free verse poem, with uneven line lengths which imitate the haphazard path of the storm. The long, fluid sentences are fittingly fast-moving and echo the gathering momentum of the storm, reinforced by the persistent enjambement.

### **Language/comments**

- There is an abundance of alliteration which adds a strong rhythm to the poem, particularly of 'w' echoing the whistling of the wind and sibilance is created by the constant 's' sounds. The storm's clamorous journey resounds in the frequent onomatopoeic language '*whines...whistling...slamming...sloshing...crack*'.
- Tension and drama are built in the first few stanzas, as nature is giving signs of the impending storm. The suspense is heightened by the use of present tense and the repetition of the present participle –ing '*lapping...winding...rattling...flapping...swinging...slamming*' which keeps the verse moving. Nothing is safe.
- The simile '*like a wide spray of buckshots*' has connotations of violence and destruction. (Buckshots are large lead pellets used for hunting game).
- The monosyllabic '*A time to go home!*' alerts us to their recognition of impending danger, as this short, sharp burst of fear reflects their panic. The fourth stanza becomes explosive as the storm increases in intensity '*a crack of thunder...black rain...gusts, beating...driving*' conveyed by some of the brutal verbs used here.
- The opening of the fifth stanza offers a pattern of three in hushed, quiet tones '*We creep...We wait; we listen*'. The pace slows down, in hope that the storm has passed. But the silence is short-lived; the storm soon restarts its journey, destroying plants as it goes '*shaking...oranges...flattening...carnations*'. Even the spider in the next verse instinctively knows he must hide.
- The antithesis between '*dead*' and '*living*' in the final line reminds us of the fragility of life: the storm has the power to wreck lives as well as homes and the landscape.

### **Other assessment opportunities**

#### **Personal and imaginative writing coursework**

Imagine being in the relative safety of your own home, whilst a storm rages outside for hours. Explore the storm's catastrophic path, imagining the route it takes and bringing it to life for your reader using descriptive writing and appealing to the senses.

### **Examination questions on the poems**

**Styles of questions:** There will be a pattern to the choice of poetry questions offered: one question will usually name a minimum of two poems, whilst the alternative question will name one poem and invite the candidate to choose another poem or poems.

**What the examiner is looking for:** Candidates will be expected to give their own personal response to the poems and use technical terms accurately and appropriately. Answers should always be supported with textual references and comments on language, form and

presentational devices should be detailed. Comparison between poems is an assessment requirement for **GCSE English Literature (1213)**.

**The following could provide the basis of practice assignments for both English and English Literature. See also the *Specimen Papers and Mark Schemes* booklet.**

1. The presentation of living creatures in *Roe-Deer* and one other poem from the collection.
2. *A Blade of Grass* and *The Thought-Fox*: how the writers discuss the process of writing poetry.
3. *Break of Day in the Trenches* and one other poem which uses a living thing as a powerful symbol.
4. How the writers' fascination with living things is presented in *Iguana Memory* and one other poem.
5. The relationships described in *The Flowers* and *Keeping Orchids*.

## Section B: Non-fiction

### English A (1203) Paper 2F or 4H

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#### Introduction

The collection of six non-fiction texts (*Sport for All?* and *Parents and Children* comprise four articles but should be seen as single units) offer a variety of engaging material on various topics.

#### Unit description

##### GCSE English A (1203) 2F or 4H

##### Section B: The Craft of the Writer – Non-fiction from the anthology

There will be **one** question based on close reading of the prepared **non-fiction texts** in the Edexcel Anthology, showing sustained interpretation of content, language and presentation. The question will focus on **one** named extract from the collection.

#### Assessment Objectives

##### Candidates will be assessed for the following Reading objectives:

- (ii) Read with insight and engagement, making appropriate references to texts and developing and sustaining interpretations of them;
- (v) Understand and evaluate how writers use linguistic, structural and presentational devices to achieve their effects and comment on ways language varies and changes.

#### Approaches to teaching the collection

##### From *In the Empire of Genghis Khan* (Stanley Stewart)

Genghis Khan (1162-1227) was a Mongol conqueror who after years of struggle to make good his succession to his father, overran the greater part of Asia bringing devastation wherever he went.

- Considering the mayhem that ensues at this wedding, the title is fitting since Genghis Khan's feisty spirit has definitely been inherited by several of the inhabitants of his country!
- The chronological structure leads us clearly through each stage of the day '*Throughout the evening...In the morning...By mid-afternoon...At four o'clock*' so that we get a full picture of events. Paragraphs are kept relatively short and cover several observations and incidents, reflecting the busy schedule of the wedding day.
- It is a heavily narrative piece and visually cinematic as our eyes follow Stewart's around the room. He manages to bring the characters to life with his detailed, vibrant descriptions, for example, one of the bride's brothers: '*broad-brimmed hat, a pencil moustache and handsome chiseled features*' and his comic comparisons to famous names '*Wyatt Earp...Lenin.*'
- The narrator's humorous style engages the reader and the text is rich with entertaining examples eg the same tradition that demands the bride hides from her groom also ironically reveals her hiding place! Stewart invites us to laugh at the drunken family members who get off the truck, but his description is polite and respectful, using the euphemism '*dishevelled merriment.*' The scene is farcically comic with a great deal of active verbs employed, as in the bizarre tug of war that results from the bride's family's attempts to leave early (repetition of '*pulled*') or the granny who is '*flattened.*' This contrasts with the static and passive nature of the bridal couple who, in the midst of all the fracas, '*sat side by side.*' Visual humour is prominent, reflected in the disproportionate heights of the bride and groom and the bizarre, unappetizing '*dizzy tiers*' of the wedding feast comprising '*biscuits, slabs of white cheese and boiled sweets...sheep parts.*'

- The extract uses a mixture of different lexical fields. The inclusion of foreign words ‘*ger...arkhi*’ and speech (which contains some slight grammatical errors for further authenticity such as ‘*you take it with you...Have you a wife?*’) add realism. This firmly places this event in a different country, with a different culture and a period of time that seems to have stood still. Battle terminology occurs frequently, emphasizing the war-like relationship between the two families ‘*lookouts...camp...armies...ranks...victory.*’
- Sentence lengths vary to add impact to meaning. The short sentences ‘*Weddings were boisterous occasions. People became unpredictable*’ echo the fast-paced nature with which these pieces of advice were delivered to the narrator. On the other hand, the long-winded, drawn out sentence which involves estimating the arrival of the wedding party mirrors the ridiculous, convoluted nature of the ‘*complicated calculations*’ themselves.
- Similes feature significantly and further enhance our understanding of the Mongolian customs, especially since several are used to link their traditions with familiar ones of ours eg ‘*like a show ger from Ideal Gers...like disappointed parties on a blind date...like wedding cakes.*’
- The content of the extract ironically focuses very little on the bride and groom, highlighting the importance of their respective families and the significant role they play in a Mongolian wedding. It appears to be a loveless match ‘*never once meeting each other’s eyes.*’
- The tone is mainly light-hearted and entertaining, with an initial hint of scepticism at facets of their culture and its outrageous and alien wedding proceedings, yet this is firmly coupled with an understanding that in this culture it is quite acceptable. At times we feel shocked by their cultural values, for example, that women are perceived as just another commodity to be bought and sold ‘*Have you a wife?...We’ll sort something out in the morning.*’ However, there is a clear shift in tone in the culminating line, as the initial cynicism changes to admiration and an invitation for us to envy their ability to clear the air in this bizarre manner ‘*the kind of thing that people in the West could only dream about.*’

### From *The Other Side of the Dale* (Gervase Phinn)

- A chronological narrative which is structured around the school day ‘*At play-time...at the end of the morning break.*’
- The extract uses a mixture of various language styles eg descriptive, poetic, colloquial. The word choices throughout are mainly positive, as it begins with praiseworthy adjectives ‘*bright...high-quality...magnificent*’ and continues later with ‘*neat...tidy...attractive...colourful.*’ This is soon contrasted however by the negative body language of Mrs Durdon ‘*nervous...busy...smiled weakly...hands trembled...blinked rapidly.*’ The initial paragraph becomes heavily descriptive, blending shorter sentences quite effortlessly with longer ones to reveal the dramatic barrenness of the moor: ‘*No wind stirred, no bird sang. All was still and silent,*’ adding an air of tension and leaving us with an ominous feeling. Phinn appeals to our sense of sight and sound ‘*few dark skeletal trees*’ and communicates his vivid imagination in a poetic manner ‘*twisted skywards as if writhing in agony.*’
- Characters and personalities of the main characters are also varied, from the anxious Mrs Durdon, to the friendly Miss Precious who enjoys a lively rapport with her pupils and the intelligent boy Joseph. Characterisation is strong, as Joseph is brought to life through Phinn’s detailed, descriptive observations and the boy’s own dialogue. This ‘*serious-faced boy*’ dominates the piece and he makes a strong impression on us since he is unusually ahead of his years for a boy of ‘*about eleven.*’ He uses an adult cliché to begin the conversation: ‘*Did you have a pleasant journey?*’ and indeed ironically leads the exchange by asking another question. His manner and actions are noticeably formal: ‘*I’m Joseph Richard Barclay*’ and he includes himself in the reason for the Inspector’s visit, using the first person plural ‘*We,*’ thereby putting himself in the same category as the staff. His knowledge is remarkably extensive and detailed, well advanced for a boy of that age and he is twice described as ‘*serious*’ and ‘*old-fashioned.*’ We detect a hint of criticism from the Inspector that Joseph’s childhood may be suffering as a result of his gifted nature, which is echoed in the sombre simile: ‘*He sat sober-faced like a receptionist at a funeral parlour.*’

- The pattern of three employed to convey the boisterousness of the children ‘*animated conversations, lively exchanges and uninhibited laughter*’ contrasts with the seriousness of the Inspector’s conversation with Joseph and reflects their innocence and endless energy, thus further contrasting with the boy’s seriousness.
- The strong dialect of the Dales is realistically reproduced by the abundance of abbreviated words, especially ‘*t*’ meaning ‘*the*’. The content of their conversations refreshingly revolve around nature, as they excitedly relate stories of frozen water in hen coops, a calf being born and the sighting of a heron.
- Both adult females are described using bird imagery: Miss Precious with the maternal and complimentary simile ‘*like a great mother hen gathering up her chicks*’ and Mrs Durdon less favourably ‘*waddled off*’ in a duck-like manner.
- The inclusion of diary entries enriches the piece as they strengthen the uniqueness of the school and add another dimension to the visit, reflecting how the school is steeped in history. Miss Precious is eager to show them to the Inspector, delighting in highlighting the grammatical and spelling errors made by an old Headmaster. The short December entries detailing the weather and pupils’ absences comically build on the repetition of the kind of day it was from ‘*Direful*’ to ‘*Awful*’ to ‘*Appalling*’ to ‘*Horrible*.’ They end with the dramatic ‘*Calamitous*,’ which is not surprising owing to the flooded toilets coinciding with the Inspector’s visit. We are invited to feel sympathetic with this nightmarish situation.

### **From *Writing Home* (Alan Bennett)**

- The characterisation of *The Lady in the Van* is very strong. The overriding impression of the lady and her position is unfavourable, yet Bennett’s feelings are ambivalent owing to the undercurrent of admiration for her. Descriptions of her physical being and situation are very telling. The ‘*old van*’ is described fairly negatively ‘*towed away...ended up*’ and although the new one seems better physically, despite its ‘*murky windscreen*,’ its closer proximity has worsened the whole scene, since visitors must now ‘*squeeze past*’ and are ‘*scrutinized*’ by her. The irony of the situation is self-evident: an uninvited guest makes invited guests feel like intruders. The van’s interior reflects its unkempt occupant: ‘*a midden [refuse pile] of old clothes...half-eaten food...ragged/tattered draperies*.’ Images of decay and neglect permeate the text: ‘*grimy raincoat...lank grey hair*.’
- Ghostly descriptions pervade the third paragraph ‘*haunting...spectral...tomb*’ which are reinforced by the witch-like nature of her home-made petrol recipe ‘*a spoonful of...a gallon of...a pinch of*.’
- Miss Shepherd’s personality is vividly communicated. Her sense of humour is comically sardonic: ‘*I don’t think this style can have got to Tunbridge Wells yet*.’ However, she sharply conveys a rude and ungrateful side to her nature which is reflected in the abrupt imperative ‘*Pipe down...I’m trying to sleep*.’ Her actions can be loud, boisterous and undignified ‘*flung open...hurled...slides on her bottom*.’ She is forthright in her opinions when provoked, which can be seen on more than one occasion. Yet she is a private person (‘*unusually, she told me a little of her own life*’), and her outbursts can be seen as a defence mechanism to avoid the prying eyes and questions of the public (ironically not helped by her very public choice of residence!)
- The form of this extract is varied. Bennett mainly uses diary entries to convey his informative and explanatory narrative (characteristically aided by the abundance of long sentences), but the inclusion of a scripted conversation between the lady and her social worker adds another element to the text. We are presented with her direct words, thus bringing her vivid character to life. Yet she comes across as thankless and challenging, echoed by the catalogue of questions she fires and further conveyed by the present tense here which highlights her demanding disposition. The first person narrative, a standard feature of diary entries, is kept to a minimum in favour of the third person singular, since ‘*Miss S*’ is the central figure.
- Her choice of Radio 4 suggests a certain hint of elegance, education and culture. Bennett subtly hints at this throughout the extract via his choice of language i.e. his clear reference to her as a ‘*lady*,’ constantly calling her ‘*Miss*’ and his literary, sophisticated word choices

for a seemingly unsophisticated character: ‘*she retired early...her sojourn...her evening stroll.*’ This technique is extended in the description of her clothes ‘*the day’s wardrobe...chiffon scarf...alternated between,*’ as if she is a fashion model and her daily choices of attire have been careful and deliberate. However, this could be viewed as ambiguous, since Bennett’s attempts to present her in this light could be heavily sarcastic and mocking. It is at this point, however, that we question his attitude towards her and can only assume he is extremely charitable and caring, showing tolerance, respect and understanding towards someone less fortunate than himself: ‘*I had run a cable...to give her light and heating*’ (financial matters are never mentioned). Yet he is only human, so whilst doing his best for her, he nevertheless at times may feel less charitable, exemplified by his unkind similes ‘*like an animal...like a drunken signalman...like a chimpanzee*’ which are indicative of her, at times, uncivilised lifestyle.

- Humour lightens the sometimes negative, derisive and scornful tones of the text and is reinforced by clichés ‘*the coast was clear...taste of his own medicine.*’ Miss Shepherd’s malapropism ‘*frisbee*’ for ‘*freebie*’ is amusing and whilst the beginning of the piece portrays her in a harsh light, the ending appears to invite our sympathies: ‘*she had felt for many years that she had failed.*’ Despite her bizarre, eccentric nature and little foibles, we are reminded that she too is only human and demands respect like everyone else.

### ***Don’t Leave Me Here to Die (Cathy O’Dowd, The Guardian)***

- The initial résumé that precedes the article immediately informs us of the content of the piece and the dilemma that the author faced. We feel shocked that the ‘*barely breathing body*’ was left, highlighted by the alliteration here. The distressingly emotive plea that follows: ‘*Don’t leave me here to die*’ is unnerving and urges us to read on to find out what happened. The article then proceeds to inform, explain and describe events that led to that difficult decision.
- Structurally, the first seven paragraphs set the scene for the reader and pose the problem; the remaining paragraphs mostly develop the narrative and unravel the mystery that has arisen. The last two paragraphs justify the decision to leave the woman and reveal both the emotional trauma and moral dilemma O’Dowd has experienced. The first half of the article ends on a quizzical note: has O’Dowd discovered the body’s identity? We are then invited to pause too; the answer is soon revealed in the second half. The constant use of the first person singular is naturally strong as it is a hugely personal and emotional account.
- Paragraphs are kept relatively brief which fits the fast-paced nature of the situation, the quick decisions and exchanges that take place. Sentences are deliberately short in places, often for dramatic effect ‘*I simply could not do it*’ or ‘*I felt sick.*’
- The language used to describe the body and its limited movements is extremely emotive, bleak, depressing and unhopeful: ‘*horrible...raggedly jerking figure...ghastly.*’ Her eyes are ‘*unfocusing, pupils huge dark voids.*’ Similes are a common feature and employ the imagery of puppets and dolls to communicate the limp, lifeless body that she witnesses ‘*like a puppet being pulled savagely by its strings...like a porcelain doll...as helpless as a rag doll.*’ Her legs are ‘*as useless as strands of spaghetti.*’ O’Dowd applies vivid images which simultaneously appal us and evoke our sympathies.
- Despite the author’s change in attitude towards helping Fran, there is an undercurrent of pessimism throughout the article. O’Dowd is realistically aware of their pointless efforts to help and that Fran’s chances of survival are minimal, as mirrored in the language she uses, calling her early on a ‘*victim*’ (signalling her own prediction that she will die) with ‘*no chance...badly incapacitated.*’ The author uses a series of rhetorical questions here which powerfully convey her negativity, for example, ‘*Should we throw it all away for some rescue attempt that was doomed?*’
- Repetition is a common feature of the text. In paragraph six, the first person plural ‘*we*’ is repeated five times at the start of a sentence, reinforcing the strength she feels as part of a group which contrasts with the isolation of the woman. Further on in the latter paragraphs, ‘*tried*’ and ‘*trying*’ is prevalent, indicating that an attempt was made to help, despite the hopeless nature surrounding it. The repetition of ‘*no*’ dominates the paragraphs at the end of



the first half of the article, further strengthening the air of negativity that filters through the text.

- The article's tone moves from anger and resentment to understanding and sympathy. Initially O'Dowd feels bitter and is outraged by the body and its audacity to jeopardise their objective to reach the summit, which is why she clearly explains the codes of conduct expected of any climber ie never to put yourself in this position. However, when the nameless body is identified as '*Fran, the bubbly American*' and '*female*,' the author is forced to face the situation on a personal level and re-evaluate her own goals, placing human life above personal ambition, which adds a more sympathetic and tolerant tone. The decision to leave the body has been a life-changing experience for the author: '*I had never watched anyone die*' and she uses this article as a vehicle for her understanding and reflection, almost as a means of catharsis.

### ***Sport for All? (Four articles)***

#### ***(i) 'Save our Children...' John Harris, The Independent***

- The melodramatic headline clearly sets the humorous and sarcastic tone of the article, as we begin to imagine a much more terrible and fearful horror than the anti-climactic '*school sport*.' This technique is repeated in the first paragraph, as suspense is created with his choice of tense language: '*anticipation...victim...creeping anxiety...sweat...ogre-like teachers...shame*,' only to reveal comically the source of this '*terror*' as '*forward rolls*.'
- By predominantly using the first person singular and plural, the author is largely conveying his own personal experiences, interwoven with brief evidence, such as the official body he cites, 'Sport England.' The article is heavily subjective, as Harris strongly conveys his opinion that the ability to excel at school sports is not synonymous with success in later life, building upon each key point that is made. His biased viewpoint is carefully structured, as in the first three paragraphs he expresses his personal opinion and reveals his own negative experiences of sport at school (a technique which resurfaces in several of the remaining paragraphs). The fourth paragraph relates the results of a survey which support his beliefs and in the fifth he sarcastically mocks the views of sporting figures.
- Harris manages to unite all parents by his use of '*our children*,' establishing a rapport with his readers early on. Another common method of his argument is to belittle others' opinions in a dismissive and critical manner, throwing scepticism on their points of view, for example, '*such nonsense...sporting figures waffled*.' He attempts to uncover opinions dressed as facts, for example, '*PE, we were told...causal link that allegedly lies*.'
- Beneath the surface of Harris' persistently humorous tone lies a serious message, which is emphasised by the abundance of negative language he employs: '*trauma...humiliated...misery...public embarrassment...slammed*.' He delights in the revenge he imposed on the '*potential sporting stars*' and thus his anger is channelled towards several groups and individuals, such as schools, students, famous sportspeople and the Chairman of Sport England. He is particularly bitter, which he expresses via hyperbole, about the prediction that he would become '*an unemployed vagrant*' if the art of forward rolls was not mastered, which he then turns into sarcasm by the suggestion he '*now proudly*' includes it on his C.V.
- The author mostly uses formal, sophisticated language to deliver his argument and add weight to it '*integral...synonymous...prodigiously*' but deliberately uses familiar terms in his closing sentence '*Erm...Trev*.' This is his final attempt to belittle the views which oppose his, inviting us to ridicule them, since Germany can hardly be described as '*a fat, useless nation who are bad at everything*.'

#### ***(ii) 'School sports culture...' Julian Borer, The Guardian***

- The controversial headline concerning '*student athletes*' in America deliberately provokes our responses and is a good example of opinion masquerading as fact. This article, although tinged with bias as demonstrated in the initial résumé and headline, does try to be more

balanced in its approach and present both sides of the argument, explaining all aspects of the topic before concluding against the ‘*godlike status*’ of student athletes and the subsequent poor academic results.

- The article is structured so that the first seven paragraphs offer a positive view of the ‘*student-athlete*’ whilst the remaining ones detail the disadvantages. The language is therefore initially enthusiastic: ‘*highlights...huge...extraordinary...heroes...exclusively.*’ To emphasise the contrast in crowd size between the UK and the USA, Borger employs humour, as he compares ‘*tens of thousands/millions*’ with ‘*about a dozen.*’ The positive advantages are numerous, for example, both genders can be involved, there is a unique focus on the young, students become ‘*heroes*’ and it is a big social event (lamentably lacking in the UK).
- The shift in tone is signalled by a rhetorical question: ‘*what does it make those who are not?*’ The language becomes more negative ‘*bullying...exclusion...frustrated...taunting, ridicule*’, focusing especially on the low morale and low self-esteem that can be detected in those not good at sports. To prove his point, Borger cites an incident in California where ‘*an entire subculture of bullying came to the surface,*’ but gives us little evidence to substantiate it. Furthermore, the letter that supposedly ‘*supports*’ it is just ‘*an angry young reader*’ ie someone else’s view on events. Another negative factor is the low graduation rate among the players; Borger includes a statistic here ‘*50%*’ to add weight to his argument.
- The concluding paragraph makes clear the author’s position (even though he has largely hidden behind the third person singular), ending his article with a moral message: ‘*there is a price to be paid for taking student sports too seriously.*’

**(iii) ‘Mind Games’ Wendy Berliner, *The Guardian***

- The alliteration in the opening summary (a technique used frequently in ‘*Mind games*’) focuses our attention on the issue this article explores ‘*Does physical activity help to build not only a better body but a better brain?*’ Berliner then attempts to answer this question in the affirmative in the course of the article.
- The text is largely serious in tone, but engages our attention in the first paragraph by the author’s light-hearted, humorous narrative style ‘*The summer holidays are in full swing*’ as she proceeds to describe the lifestyles of typically inactive ‘*couch potato kids.*’
- Various methods are used by Berliner to persuade us that school sports are beneficial, although she is honest, revealing ‘*Research is still in its infancy*’ and even Steve Kibble is quoted as saying ‘*We can’t say...but it does help maximise...*’ She cites a number of academics/individuals and their subsequent reputed establishments to add authority to her viewpoint, such as ‘*Susan Greenfield, professor...Oxford University*’, ‘*Steve Kibble, senior physical education adviser for Devon*’ and ‘*Ben Tan, director of the British Heart Foundation...Loughborough University.*’
- To strengthen her position further, she reveals that the research has even been on an international scale, detailing in particular the ‘*long-term French study.*’ Berliner’s points are credible, as each one is extremely well detailed and thorough ‘*a three-year investigation*’ and ‘*in-depth interviews.*’ Consequently, paragraphs and sentences are fairly long.
- Berliner successfully uses mostly formal, specialist language in the article to further convince us of the advantages of her opinion. The explanation of her argument in the second paragraph uses sophisticated, scientific terminology ‘*dendrites...filaments...neurons*’ which sounds authoritative.
- Positive case studies are provided eg in Exeter, evidence suggested that higher SATs scores resulted from those ‘*children who reported exercising at least three times per week.*’ Medical evidence proves that exercise increases the metabolism.
- To end her article, Berliner turns her attention to the government, criticising them for having ‘*squeezed and neglected*’ PE in schools, clearly making the point that ironically the government should have left PE levels as they were in order to enhance academic ones.

**(iv) 'Sports in Schools' Duncan McNeil, MSP Greenock Telegraph**

- This article begins on a personal level, using the first person singular and plural to relate the author's experiences of sport at school, but then shifts into third person singular to comment generally on the state of sport in schools. McNeil recounts his own knowledge of school sports in a humorous and hyperbolic manner '*swimming past the icebergs...pausing briefly to shout that we weren't drowning.*'
- A clear structural pattern develops in the first six paragraphs. The first two amusing paragraphs are closely followed by a short, one sentence paragraph, which adds his subjective opinion in a serious tone: '*But PE in schools wasn't as important then.*' This technique is then repeated: two paragraphs of mostly comical memories, including visual humour '*performing gymnastics in an attempt to get Joe 90 in focus,*' which conclude with another one line paragraph '*But how times have changed,*' conveying a somewhat nostalgic mood.
- McNeil then changes from the past to present tense to discuss the current unsatisfactory lack of exercise amongst young people, again using a distinct pattern (here of three) to reinforce his personal opinion: '*more likely...than...more used...than...more common...than.*' He bemoans the present cultural climate which he believes nurtures inactivity: '*Playstation...family car...science channel.*'
- The author dresses his opinion as fact: '*So, if today's young people aren't getting exercise in their spare time,*' making a mass generalisation without any evidence to support this claim. Although his argument suggests several positive benefits from an increased participation in sporting activities eg improved fitness levels (and possibly less use of cigarettes and drugs), discipline and self-confidence, it lacks the necessary proof to verify it, other than mention of the Scottish Parliament and '*measures*' being taken.
- The language used is not overly formal, with a few colloquialisms '*fag...shut up...kids*' and is quite conversational in tone.
- McNeil concludes with an optimistic repetition of '*benefits are clear*' on both health and social grounds, hoping that this will filter through to national team level.

**Parents and Children** (Four articles)

**(i) 'Parents learn how to say NO...' Alexandra Frean, The Times**

- The initial headline is ironic and unexpected, since stereotypically it is children who learn new behavioural patterns. This role reversal is established early on, and is strengthened by the fact parents are portrayed as fearful of their own children '*retreated...escape...bemused...struggling*' and unable to cope. They are described as a postwar generation who were not disciplined according to conventional methods, but by '*gospels of...gurus*', such as the '*American Benjamin Spock*' (although an '*expert*' then, the implication is that his methods do not transcend time and cultural changes). Negative adjectives present their offspring in an unfavourable light '*overbearing, whingeing*' and later critically labels them as '*spoilt brats.*'
- The organisation 'Parent Network' has reported '*a growing demand for advice*' which confirms this situation. It also adds authority to the growing argument since it '*runs 250 parenting courses*' and therefore has a lot of experience in this area by its immediate contact with parents. By including a quote from a 'Parent Network' trainer and especially the views of the '*author*' and '*psychologist*' Steve Biddulph, Frean introduces the modern solution to the problem, which is '*teaching...and encouraging them.*' Biddulph has international recognition in this area, highlighted by the statistic '*3000 parents*' which is why the article ends with an example of the type of advice he would give.
- Structurally, the text immediately introduces the problem, then proceeds to provide the answers to remedy it, making it clear that smacking is not part of the solution. Frean uses the third person singular throughout the article, which keeps her direct views at a distance from the reader as she mainly concentrates on reporting the opinions of others (although we of course assume she supports the views of the individuals she quotes).

**(ii) ‘Pay your children...’ Cherry Norton, *The Independent***

- The headline appears initially paradoxical and it therefore succeeds in engaging our attention since we want to discover how ‘*too much attention*’ could possibly harm a child.
- After introducing the problem in the headline and first paragraph, Norton (using the third person) spends the rest of the article supporting the argument and uses various official sources to explain why. To add authority to the argument, the chief executive of Zero to Three is quoted, along with an employee of Parenting Connections consultancy, both of whom support the controversial claims. Despite the abundance of quotations from these sources which offer their strong opinions, very little research evidence or statistics are offered. The reference to ‘*Other research*’ in the third paragraph is extremely vague.
- The natural attention parents give their children is clearly criticized and not portrayed in a particularly positive light ‘*anxious...limited time...push toddlers...bombarded with stimuli*’ and implies that professional parents who are keen to improve their child’s skills can ironically damage them.
- Many of the claims do seem exaggerated, for example, the suggestion that talking to a child with the radio or TV on could make them ‘*future criminals*’ or the extreme idea that it is a ‘*form of child abuse.*’ Much of the language used implies that children will be damaged by the over attention: ‘*long-term detriment...lower curiosity, competence.*’ The claims are heavily biased, offering only the negative viewpoints with no advantages. Although the tone of the article is serious, the nature of some of these controversially bizarre claims can diminish its overall impact.

**(iii) ‘Use Persuasion not Coercion’ Madeleine Bunting, *The Guardian***

- The imperative in the headline, which is softened by the advisory tone, clearly sets the focus of this piece: smacking, shouting and manipulating are not the answer to discipline problems. Bunting’s voice is serious and strong in the first two paragraphs, emphasized by her repeated use of the first person singular which then fades into the third person.
- The initial sentence ‘*First, let me make it very clear: I hate violence against children*’ communicates her stance unquestionably, echoed through her repetition of ‘*never*’. The issue of smacking shocks her and she is scathing towards the behaviour of some parents ‘*lousy temper out of control...cajole...manipulate,*’ sarcastically mocking their persuasive attempts ‘*Oooh sweetie.*’ Her forthright attitude is expressed in the rhetorical question (a technique she uses four times in the course of the article) ‘*Sounds innocuous?*’ which she then attempts to refute, enhanced by her direct and candid language ‘*The point is...*’
- Although Bunting has expressed her dislike of smacking in a blunt fashion, she nevertheless feels that to pass legislation against it would be ‘*a ludicrous intervention.*’ She differentiates between those adults who work with children and the parents themselves whom she feels have the right to do so if they wish ‘*should that be made a crime?*’ Despite her own earlier views on this issue ‘*I have been horrified*’ she nevertheless is able to sympathise with parents who are pushed to the limits, using emotional language ‘*sometimes snap...sometimes fail...exhausted mother...toddler tantrum...wailing baby*’ which demonstrates an appreciation of their predicament. The resolution to the problem is then provided, reiterating the heading that persuasion is the answer and that parents need help to realise this, not a criminal record.

**(iv) ‘Smacking not the answer...’ Various reporters, *Children’s Express***

- A collaborative article expressing the views of a group of school pupils who are mainly anti-smacking. The colloquialism in the title ‘*kids*’ could belittle them slightly, as by labelling themselves as such (if they wrote the headline too), their views might be taken less seriously. On the other hand, it might have been deliberately used to suggest that although they might be young, they nevertheless have strong opinions to convey on this issue and

therefore expect to be taken seriously, reflected by their chosen format for their views ie a media article.

- The initial italicised paragraph informs us of the current situation in the UK and appears to have been taken from another document, due to the sophisticated nature of its language.
- The article comprises six contributions by children aged 13-15. The opening is engaging, as it realistically begins with a typical threat from an angry parent and describes their child as '*red-faced...bawls...dragged...throbbing clipped ear.*' This is then followed by a series of three rhetorical questions, two of which directly relate to the incident, whilst the third uses it as a springboard to debate the issue of banning all physical punishment. In attempting to persuade us that smacking is wrong, the article includes a number of points, contributors and organisations, ranging from the teenagers themselves (using mostly conversational language in their quotes) to Children are Unbeatable and NSPCC, which adds substance to the argument. Research too is provided, such as from Sweden.
- Most of the points the children make are general, but our sympathies are directed towards Paul who relates his own personal experience as he speaks of being hit and the '*emotional scar*' that remains. Collectively, the succession of opinions offered spans several reasons for the inappropriateness of smacking, such as '*sort of barbaric...children as punchbags...distances you from your parents*' as well as suggesting various solutions, for example, allowing adults and children the same rights, withdrawing privileges and parents getting help. No single solution is offered, communicating the complexity of the issue.
- Realistically, the article makes it clear that some parents' definitions of 'smacking' differs and that a total ban would never completely stop it. The concluding point from Chris, 15, offers a compromise as he feels '*smacking is acceptable sometimes.*' This may not be as well placed as it could have been since this article has mainly argued against smacking, therefore it could have the potential to undermine the majority argument the article has carefully built up!

## Section B: Different cultures short stories

### English B (1204) Paper 2F or 4H

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This collection of stories is an examination text for English B, 1204 (Paper 2F or 4H), or can be used as a coursework text for Unit 2 Different Cultures and Traditions, English A, 1203.

The support for this section is presented in the form of questions for students to consider. They can be used for group or class discussion, or for written response.

*Veronica* by Nadine Gordimer

#### Stage 1

1. Read the opening paragraph only (lines 1-9).
  - What clues and hints are there about how the story will develop? Underline or highlight the key words and phrases. Compare your underlined/highlighted version with another person's. Discuss the similarities and differences between the two versions.
2. Read the second paragraph (lines 10-15).
  - What do the following words (lines 13-14) suggest about Veronica: '*...she asked me endless questions about my school and the town and what I was going to be when I grew up*'?
  - What can you predict about how the lives of Veronica and the narrator might unfold from what we read in lines 1-15?

#### Stage 2

3. Read the rest of the story.
  - How accurate were your predictions, based on the first two paragraphs, about Veronica and the narrator?
4. Re-read closely paragraphs 2-4 (lines 10-23).
  - How does Adewale Maja-Pearce build up an impression of:  
Veronica  
Okeke  
the relationship between them?

Highlight in three different colours words and phrases that relate to Veronica, Okeke and their relationship.

5. Look again at the next section of the story (lines 24-48).
  - How does the writer use dialogue and her own narrative comments to add to the reader's understanding of Veronica and Okeke?
6. Re-read lines 49-61.
  - These 13 lines span a period of ten years. Why does the writer pass over them so rapidly? What are the most important things she tells us in this section?
7. Re-read lines 62-108.
  - Line 62 begins: '*I was shocked...*' What shocked Okeke about the village and about Veronica and her situation?
  - What do we learn about the causes of the troubles?

8. Re-read the final section of the story (lines 109-136).
- What are your thoughts about Veronica and Okeke in these concluding lines?
  - Compare the last line of the story with lines 39-40: *'I snapped a twig and threw it into the water. It bobbed on the current and then vanished from sight.'*  
In what ways could these words be seen as symbolic?

### Stage 3

9. Write a single sentence which sums up the moral of the story, or the “message” the writer seems to convey.
10. Select an alternative title for *Veronica* by choosing a word or a group of words used in the story. Explain and justify your choice.
11. Okeke says (line 34): *'I cried that night for the terrible waste.'* Who or what do you think was responsible for that terrible waste?
12. What does *Veronica* suggest to the reader about gender roles, the effects of education and the differences between urban and rural life in this society?
13. Compare the character and behaviour of Okeke with that of Paulus Eysendyck in *Country Lovers*. In what ways are the experiences of Veronica similar to and different from those of Thebedi in *Country Lovers*?

### **Country Lovers** by Adewale Maja-Pearce

1. Apart from single sentences at lines 137-138 and line 212, the only direct speech in this story occurs in lines 154-161. What is the effect of the switch from third person narrative to dialogue at this point in the story? Look particularly at the way Paulus refers to the baby. What do these lines reveal about the character of Paulus Eysendyck?
2. What impression does Nadine Gordimer give of Mr and Mrs Eysendyck in the final two paragraphs of the story (lines 210-212)? Comment in detail on their words and actions.
3. Re-read the final paragraph.
- Why do you think Nadine Gordimer tells us that the Sunday newspapers *'spelled her name in variety of ways'*?
  - What is the effect of referring to Thebedi not by her name but as *'the black girl'*?
  - What is the significance of the fact that she spoke to the press *'in her own language'*?
  - What does the final sentence of the story suggest about Thebedi's feelings?
4. Look closely at all of the references in the story to Paulus, Thebedi, Njabolu and Paulus's mother and father.
- How do your feelings about each of the main characters change as the story progresses? Identify the precise points in the story where your judgements about the characters change.
  - For each of these characters, compile a grid categorising their words and actions as kind, unkind or neutral, as in the following example:

#### **Njabolu**

unkind words/actions

neutral words/actions

kind words/actions

unkind words/actions	neutral words/actions	kind words/actions
		He bought equipment and clothing for the baby.

		He comforted Thebedi with words and caresses.
		He buried the baby and was going to make a cross.

**5. The ending**

- Why did the judge find the accused not guilty?
  - Was the outcome of the trial just or unjust?
  - On the basis of the evidence presented, what do you think you would have decided if you had been the judge presiding over this case?
  - What does Nadine Gordimer tell us as readers of her story that is not revealed in the courtroom?
6. How far do you agree with the following statements?
- “Paulus Eysendyck is entirely responsible for his actions.”
  - “Paulus Eysendyck is driven to act as he does by the nature of South African society as it then was.”

***The Schoolteacher’s Guest*** by Isabel Allende

1. What does the title suggest about the story?
2. What is your reaction to the opening paragraph (lines 1-4)?
3. What does the dialogue reveal about the relationship between the two speakers?
4. Look closely at what Ines says about the dead man in the following lines: 83, 98-99, 101-120. What seems to be her state of mind and her attitude towards what she has done? How do you react to her as a reader – with revulsion, shock, fascination, admiration, or what?
5. Re-read the paragraph beginning: ‘*Meanwhile, the schoolteacher Ines...*’ (lines 169-176) and the final piece of dialogue (lines 177-180). Do her actions and her words seem in any way surprising or contradictory?
6. Look again at Ines’s comment: ‘*I’m in the right, he killed my boy*’ (line 110). Is there any legal or moral justification for this view?
7. Was it right for Riad Alabi and other members of the community to cover up the crime? Were they right to place loyalty to a friend above respect for the law?
8. If a similar situation were to arise now in your community, would it be right to help the murderer, to refuse help but remain silent or to inform the police?
9. Is it ever right to take the law into your own hands?
10. How does Isabel Allende engage and maintain the reader’s interest?
11. What are the key words that set the tone for the story?



### ***The Gold Cadillac*** by Mildred Taylor

1. What's special about a Cadillac? What's special about a *gold* Cadillac? If this story has been set in England, what make of car might have been substituted for the Cadillac?
2. How does the writer convey the excitement as the new Cadillac is brought home?
3. Look for examples of dialect speech. How does the use of dialect establish a sense of place?
4. Why did the narrator's mother react to the Cadillac as she did?
5. What do you think the narrator's mother and father talked about when they had dinner at the corner café (line 123)? Write an extra scene for the story, including dialogue.
6. Why did the writer's uncles disapprove of his father taking the car to Mississippi?
7. Is he right to take the car despite the warnings?
8. Look at the dialogue from lines 158 to 187. Comment in detail on the points raised by each speaker. Who do you agree with?
9. What was the family's experience of segregation and prejudice during their journey to the southern states?
10. Look at the way the policemen speak to Wilbert. What does this show about the social setting for the story?
11. Both Wilbert and his wife change their minds at different points in the story. Why does this happen? What does each learn from the experience of buying and selling the Cadillac?
12. Does this story have a moral? If so, what is it?

### ***A Stench of Kerosene*** by Amrita Pritam

1. Read the first four paragraphs (lines 1-20).
  - What do we learn of Guleri's life and thoughts from this opening section?
2. Read lines 21 to 50.
  - How does Amrita Pritam show the reader that Manak is troubled about something? Look closely at the dialogue and at the way he behaves.
  - How does Guleri react to Manak's words and actions?
3. Read lines 51 to 66.
  - How does Amrita Pritam take the reader back in time and what does she reveal about the marriage customs of this region?
  - How does she return the reader to the present?
4. Read lines 67 to 80.
  - What possible explanations can you think of for the lack of open communication between Guleri and Manak?
  - Which words in this part of the story sum up most effectively the state of Guleri and Manak's relationship?

5. Read lines 81 to 92.
  - How does this section of the story explain the change in Manak’s attitude towards Guleri?
  - What do these lines reveal about Manak’s relationship with his mother and about marriage customs in this society?
  
6. Read lines 93 to 106
  - What does the exchange between Bhavani and Manak tell the reader about the feelings and attitudes of each man?
  - What does the last sentence of this section (*‘Manak’s eyes remained on the flute till Bhavani disappeared from view.’*) suggest about Manak’s thoughts?
  
7. Read lines 107 to 119.
  - How does Manak react to the news of Guleri’s death?
  - His second wife says: *‘I am not his wife. I’m just someone he happened to marry’*. What do these words reveal about her and about Manak?
  
8. Read lines 120 to 130?
  - How does Amrita Pritam show Manak’s state of mind in this section?
  - *‘Take him away! Take him away! He stinks of kerosene.’* How do you react to these final words?
  
9. Re-read lines 26 to 50.
  - Now that you know the whole story, interpret Manak’s words and actions in this section of the story by explaining what you think his unspoken thoughts were as the dialogue and action unfold. (If you are given a photocopy of this section of the story, you could annotate it line by line in the margins to show Manak’s thoughts and feelings.)
  
10. What is distinctive about the cultural setting of this story? Make notes about:
  - life in the village
  - courtship and marriage customs
  - relationships between husbands and wives
  - relationships between mothers and sons
  - taboos about what may be spoken about openly.
  
11. Is Amrita Pritam a neutral reporter of events or does she pass judgement on her characters? What do you think is her attitude towards Guleri, Manak and Manak’s mother? Look carefully at the ways in which the author presents these characters and comment on her technique.
  
12. Read the following statements about the story:
  - *“A Stench of Kerosene is simply a story about a particular tragedy.”*
  - *“In A Stench of Kerosene Amrita Pritam attacks the traditional marriage customs that undermine the individual freedom and happiness of women.”*

To what extent do you agree with each of these statements?

### ***Vendetta*** by Guy de Maupassant

1. Look up the meaning of the word *vendetta* in a good dictionary (i.e. one which gives extended, detailed definitions).

2. Look carefully at how direct speech is used in this story. Comment on the effect on the reader of each instance of direct speech.
3. The opening words of the story are '*Paulo Saverini's widow*'. Look carefully at every other reference in the story to her. What do you notice and what is the significance of these references? Her husband is dead and yet we are told his first name; what is the significance of the fact that we are not told hers?
4. Discuss the mother's motivation. To what extent do you sympathise with her and approve of her actions?
5. Look at Guy de Maupassant's account of how Antoine Saverini met his death (lines 19-20) and at the final sentence of the story. What do these lines imply about the woman's actions? Is her act of revenge morally justified? What does the writer seem to think? What do you think?
6. Suppose that Antoine Saverini's mother has been arrested and put on trial for murder.
  - You are her defending counsel. Write your final speech to the court in which you present her actions in a way which will result in her acquittal, or at least minimise the severity of her sentence should she be found guilty.
  - You are the prosecuting counsel. Write your final speech to persuade the court of her guilt and of the need for a severe sentence.

## The writing tasks

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### English coursework (Unit 1) and the English examinations (1203 and 1204)

All of the writing tasks set on examination papers and for coursework target one or another of the writing triplets:

- explore, imagine, entertain (Coursework Unit 1)
- inform, explain, describe (Examination 2F or 4H)
- analyse, review, comment (Examination 3F or 5H)
- argue, persuade, advise (Examination 3F or 5H)

In some cases the writing task will specify that, within a particular triplet, one of the three verbs should provide the primary focus. For example, in the triplet *argue, persuade, advise*, examination questions might begin:

*Argue* the case for or against...

Write a letter to *persuade* the headteacher of your school...

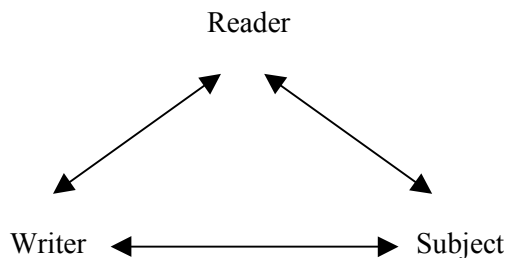
Write an article to *advise* teenagers about...

It is important for students to be able to respond to these cues appropriately if they are to write relevant and effective answers. In other cases, the writing task may be more open-ended, and individual writers will be able to exercise more choice in deciding the direction for their writing. For example, the single word title *Doubts* for explore/imagine/entertain could stimulate three different writers to produce:

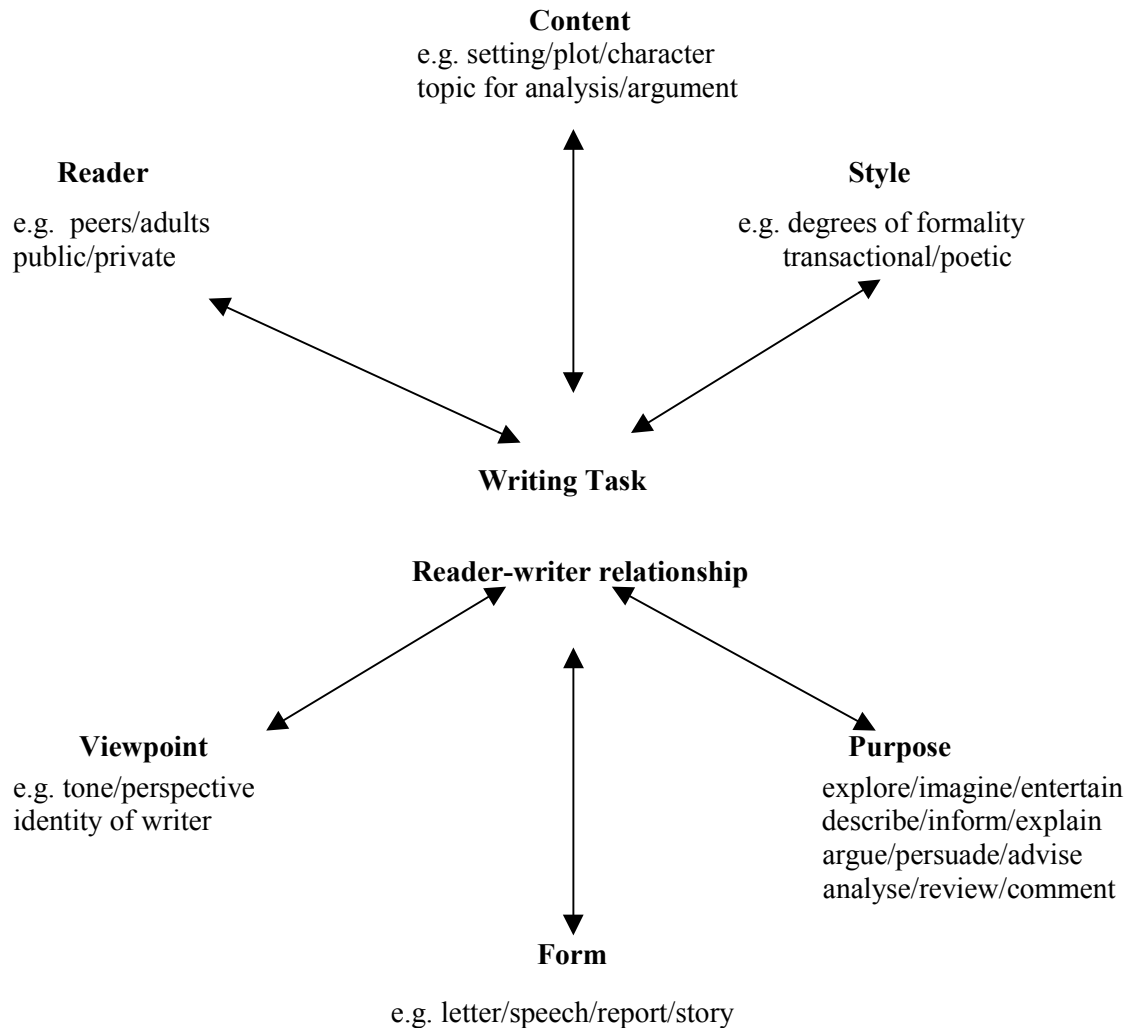
- a short story whose primary purpose is to *entertain*
- reflective prose to *explore* the writer's own feelings
- a poem which creates an *imaginative* vision of an individual's doubts.

All GCSE students need to be aware of the characteristics forms, functions and contexts of these triplets so that they are able to produce writing which is appropriate to the tasks that are set. An effective way of acquiring the necessary understanding is to study a wide range of models of the different varieties of writing. This will develop awareness of the broad characteristics of each triplet, and also the more subtle distinctions carried by the twelve verbs incorporated within the four triplets.

It is necessary, however, to see the writing triplets within a broader context. All writers need to consider the interrelationship between their subject matter, their persona as writer and their target readership. This relationship is often represented diagrammatically.



This can usefully be expanded to highlight a more complex network of decisions which writers need to make:



In a GCSE examination or coursework assignment, some of the variables will be given (e.g. *Write a letter to your headteacher...*) but the writer then needs to make a series of judgements about, for example, what would be an appropriate style or tone to adopt. The precise definitions of such terms as *tone* or *perspective* are less important than an understanding that in any piece of writing a **reader-writer relationship** is established, and the effective writer ensures that this relationship enhances rather than inhibits effective communication. The evidence of examination scripts shows that not all candidates realise, for instance, that a letter of complaint which is loosely structured and couched in intemperate or abusive language is less likely to achieve the writer's intended outcome than one which is measured in tone and sets out clearly the nature of the problem and what form of redress is expected.

The following section sets out definitions for the twelve verbs which make up the triplets and also gives examples of some of the writing tasks which students might undertake. One of the most effective ways of extending students' writing repertoires is to examine closely good examples of writing which illustrates the various writing purposes. The key terms in the diagram above provide a basis for examining the features of writing which these examples contain. It is also worth studying aspects of the grammar (such as the use of modal verbs in persuasive texts) and the features of cohesion within and between paragraphs. Until students have identified and understood the ways in which various texts work and the characteristic

forms and features of writing which represents the four writing triplets, their ability to write effective and appropriate texts will be restricted.

Nevertheless, there is, of course, a good deal of scope for the individual styles of different writers to emerge, and some triplets incorporate a great deal more variety of form and response than others. For example, *imagine* can be as individualistic as the imagination of the writer; on the other hand, analytical writing is more likely to foreground the process of analysis, and personal or idiosyncratic writing habits may well be less apparent, and less appropriate. Some of the verbs which make up the triplets imply a reader, recipient or respondent. Others imply that the nature of the writing task is more introspective and that the writing activity may be entirely for the benefit of the writer, indeed that the writer and reader are one and the same person. A private diary entry would be an obvious example of this.

Students should be encouraged to consider the distinctive features of the writing triplets. One way of doing this is for groups or individuals to assemble examples of texts of various kinds for display.

### **Explore, imagine, entertain**

#### **Explore**

- to examine or investigate
- to travel into unfamiliar or unknown regions

#### Examples

*Poetry*: exploration of feelings and attitudes experienced at a turning-point in the writer's life  
*Autobiographical writing*: retrospective exploration of an experience in the writer's childhood  
*Confessional letter*: confiding in a close friend about feelings of regret or embarrassment  
*Non-fiction*: exploratory account of a visit to a strange or unfamiliar place

#### **Imagine**

- to form a mental image of something
- to think, believe or guess
- to produce ideas, pictures, narratives, stories

#### Examples

*Poetry*: transformations of everyday objects or scenes by the use of figurative language  
*Short story*: transporting a character from a novel or play into a new context or situation  
*Script for theatre radio or television*: creation of new characters, conflicts and relationships

#### **Entertain**

- to provide amusement for the reader

This is perhaps the widest of all of the writing categories. Good writing within any of the writing triplets will need to communicate effectively by capturing and maintaining the interest of readers. Entertainment is not the exclusive domain of writers of fiction and other imaginative forms. The enormous range of magazines catering for general and specialist interests illustrates the breadth of subjects which various readers find entertaining. For the purposes of GCSE writing tasks, however, this category is more concerned with the writer's purpose, intention and treatment of the subject than with the subject matter itself. The writer whose primary concern is to entertain his target readers needs to feel confident about the chosen topic and clear about the tastes, preferences and expectations of the target readership.

Many teachers have achieved highly successful outcomes by creating opportunities for students to write parodies of particular publications or genres. It is, of course, essential to prepare the way by ensuring that students become familiar with the characteristics of the writing which is to be parodied. This approach enables individual writers to select subject matter that appeals to them but it also requires them to become aware of distinctive aspects of the chosen register. They need to examine closely details of language such as the choice of vocabulary, sentence structures and paragraphing. In some genres, a study of rhetorical patterning of language will be required. An important virtue of this approach is that the disciplines of reading and writing are closely integrated in a way that should enhance candidates' achievements in both aspects.

## **Inform, explain, describe**

### **Inform**

- to give information to the reader

#### Examples

*Travel brochure or advertisement:* setting out itinerary for an adventure holiday or journey;

*Newspaper article:* informing readers about the attractions available to travellers in a particular area

*Letter:* offering part-time job to a student and setting out terms and conditions of employment

### **Explain**

- to make something comprehensible by giving a clear and detailed account of a situation, problem, structure or sequence of events or actions, etc
- to give a justification or rationale for one's own actions and words, or those of another person

#### Examples

*Web site entry:* an explanation of the rules of a sport or game

*Leaflet:* an explanation of how to assemble a piece of technical equipment

*Newspaper article:* an explanation of an aspect of scientific discovery for the non-specialist reader

*Letter:* explain a course of action, or a decision taken

### **Describe**

- to give the reader an account or representation of a place, a person or an event

#### Examples

*Travel writing:* a description of a place and/or its inhabitants in the writer's own country or abroad

*Autobiographical writing:* an account of an episode from the writer's childhood

*Journalism or reportage:* an eye-witness account of a memorable public event

## **Analyse, review, comment**

### **Analyse**

- to examine in detail in order to discover the meaning or essence
- to break something down into its components or essential features

#### Examples

*Written report:* examining evidence in order to clarify issues surrounding a controversial event

*Coursework assignment in another subject, such as History:* an examination of contemporary records in order to challenge or confirm an assertion or interpretation of events.

## **Review**

- to look at something again, or to re-examine
- to look back upon earlier events
- to inspect
- to write a critical assessment of a book, film, play, concert, television programme etc.

### Examples

*Newspaper or website:* a review of a book, film, restaurant, etc;

*Newspaper report:* an account of a football match or other sporting event

*Magazine article:* a retrospective account of the fortunes of an individual sports person or a team during the past season.

## **Comment**

- to express an opinion
- to explain or criticise

### Examples

*A “have your say” column in a local newspaper:* readers’ opinions about proposed housing in a development on a school playing field

*Script for a TV show:* viewers’ opinions about a topical issue

## **Argue, persuade, advise**

### **Argue**

- to present reasons in support of or opposition to a course of action or an opinion
- to attempt to prove or disprove that an assertion is true
- to express, develop and justify a point of view about issues, events, behaviour, attitudes, values, etc. by the use of logical or rational exposition

### Examples

*Letters to newspapers:* protesting against a local planning road or housing scheme;

*Articles on controversial topics:* raising the school-leaving age to 18

### **Persuade**

- to influence readers to accept a point of view on a given topic or argument, or to engage in particular practical actions, by the use of emotive and/or logical appeal
- to influence a person to behave in a certain way or accept particular beliefs

### Examples

*Letters to newspapers:* appealing to readers to support the work of a charity, or join a political campaign

*Advertising copy:* encouraging consumers to buy a particular product; persuading people to desist from some form of socially undesirable behaviour, such as drink-driving

*Pamphlets:* arousing the interest and encouraging the active participation of people in a campaign for a by-pass; encouraging people to give money to a charity

### **Advise**

- to offer advice to a person
- to recommend a course of action or offer counsel to another person or persons

### Examples

*Letter to a friend:* suggesting how a family conflict might be resolved; advising a student taking a gap year how this time might best be spent

*Article in consumer magazine:* guiding potential buyers about how to select a mountain bike or some other type of sports equipment



## **Unprepared media texts (1203 only, Paper 3F or 5H)**

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Papers 3F and 5H test candidates' reading and writing within the context of unseen print-based media texts. The examination questions test candidates' abilities to understand and evaluate such texts and to write analytically and persuasively. Non-print-based media will not form part of the focus for Papers 3F and 5H of this specification. However, the media coursework of Specification B, 1204, provides wide scope for the study of television, radio, film and electronic media.

**The materials for the Media element of this specification, 1203, will be drawn from the following print-based media texts:**

- Advertisements
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Brochures
- Leaflets
- Mailshots

Candidates should be encouraged to read media texts in the light of the following statement:  
**Media texts are constructed by writers, for particular readers, for particular purposes.**

This offers a simple but powerful model of communication which may be used to help candidates to analyse a wide range of different texts, and also to acquire a sensitivity to the different writing tasks which they may be called on to perform.

Although the questions set for Papers 3F and 5H will direct candidates to consider the language and content of unseen written texts, questions may also be asked about other features including the use of different sizes and styles of typeface. Candidates may need to write about the layout and design of texts, showing for example how the use of graphics and photographs can contribute to the overall communicative effectiveness.

It should be stressed, however, that Papers 3F and 5H **do not** require candidates to have followed a media studies course. The media texts which are presented to candidates on these papers provide a context within which the reading and writing assessments for the English specification may be applied. The questions which are set will **not** presuppose knowledge of a specialist media studies vocabulary, although candidates will be expected to understand certain media terms which are in general use.

Candidates will also be expected to understand the concepts of audience, purpose and style, both in commenting on texts and in producing their own texts in response to questions. Two ranges of writing are addressed in these papers: analyse, review, comment (Question 2) and argue, persuade, advise (Question 3). The analyse, review, comment question will take one of two approaches; it may focus directly on the stimulus material presented in the examination paper, or it may allow candidates to analyse, review, comment on areas drawn from their own knowledge and experience.

The specimen papers and past papers from over the last few years illustrate possible approaches which examiners may adopt. These materials may be used with students to familiarise them with a range of media texts and to help them to gain confidence about the sorts of activity which they will be likely to face in the examinations. Copies of past papers and mark schemes are available from Edexcel Publications (see page 130 for details)

The assessment objectives which are targeted in Papers 3F and 5H are listed on pages 7, 8 and 9 of the specification, but the following assessment objectives will be particularly targeted in certain questions:

- |    |                |  |
|----|----------------|--|
| Q1 | <b>reading</b> | understand and evaluate how writers use linguistic, structural and presentational devices to achieve their effects     |
| Q2 | <b>writing</b> | (Range of writing: to analyse, review, comment)<br>communicate clearly<br>organise ideas into sentences and paragraphs |
| Q3 | <b>writing</b> | (Range of Writing: to argue, persuade, advise)<br>adapt writing for wide range of different audiences                  |

The mark scheme requires examiners to pay particular attention to the target objectives in each question. In the case of Question 3, both of the objectives stated for Question 2 (communicate clearly and organise ideas into sentences) are also relevant but the particular focus for assessment is the extent to which candidates adapt their writing for the audience specified in the question. Naturally, the overall effectiveness of candidates' answers will also be dependent on their clarity of expression and the cohesion of their sentences and paragraphs. In awarding marks for Question 3, examiners will also take into account these more general criteria. Where candidates are asked to create their own media text, the focus of the mark scheme will be on the organisation and expression of the written content according to the specified audience and purpose. The creation of elaborate presentational devices is not required. Therefore candidates are advised to use their time in the examination wisely, focusing on the written content of their answer, not the layout and design.

## **Unprepared non-fiction texts**

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### **GCSE English B (1204) 3F or 5H**

#### **Section A: Unprepared non-fiction texts**

There will be one question, which will be assessed for **reading** and will involve making appropriate reference to texts and developing and sustaining interpretations of them. The reading passage will be an **unprepared non-fiction text** included in the examination paper.

Students will be expected to comment on a writer's choice of detail and language, approach, techniques, identify implications and select relevant textual evidence to support the points made.

The reading passages will over time sample a range of non-fiction writing, from autobiographical writing to expressions of personal opinion.

#### **Assessment Objectives**

##### **Candidates will be assessed for the following Reading objectives:**

- (iii) Read with insight and engagement, making appropriate references to texts and developing and sustaining interpretations of them;
- (iv) Select material appropriate to their purpose, collate material from different sources, and make cross references;
- (vi) Understand and evaluate how writers use linguistic, structural and presentational devices to achieve their effects and comment on ways language varies and changes.

#### **Suggested practice texts**

Centres could practise with various genres of non-fiction texts, eg autobiographical, discursive, expressions of personal viewpoint. The following books are a useful source of practice material:

*Real People, Real Places* – Heinemann New Windmill 0 435 12448 X – contains a good selection of non-fiction extracts (with some student activities) under various genre headings eg Diaries and Journals, Biography and Autobiography, Letters, People's Ideas.

*Klondyke Kate and Other Non-Fiction Texts* – English and Media Centre 0 907016 12 X – an anthology for Years 9-13 containing an engaging selection of non-fiction texts and detailed student activities eg Travel, Argument, Reportage, Information.

*Tracks 2* and the new Edexcel anthology contain non-fiction passages which could be used for practice questions, but in most cases they would need to be edited or cut to appropriate length for an unprepared passage of about 500-600 words.

*Essential Articles* – Caryl Press – are folders of photocopiable media texts covering a wide range of non-fiction topics.

## Mark schemes for writing: guidance for teachers

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This guidance applies to Unit 1 of coursework (Personal and imaginative writing) for English A (1203), English B (1204) and English Mature (5203). There is a new procedure for marking all writing answers in the GCSE Specifications for 2004. Two separate marks will be required, one out of 27, the other out of 13, for each piece of Personal and imaginative coursework.

The *Specimen Examination Papers with Mark Schemes* booklet for GCSE English explains how to mark the writing pieces in the examination; the following explains the procedure for Unit 1 coursework.

### **From the English subject criteria:**

*A specification must include objectives for writing which require candidates to demonstrate their ability to:*

- (i) communicate clearly and imaginatively, using and adapting forms for different readers and purposes;*
- (ii) organise ideas into sentences, paragraphs and whole texts using a variety of linguistic and structural features;*
- (iii) use a range of sentence structures effectively with accurate punctuation and spelling.*

***In mark schemes for writing the weighting of marks for assessment objectives (i) and (ii) combined should be twice that for assessment objective (iii).***

### **Notes**

- The keyword in (i) is **communicate**. This assessment objective includes awareness of reader and purpose; clarity of expression; apt choice of vocabulary.
- The keyword in (ii) is **organise**. This assessment objective includes sentence, paragraph and whole-text structure; the overall cohesion of the piece; such features as openings and endings; apt use of imagery and other linguistic devices.
- The keywords in (iii) are **range** and **accurate**. The accuracy of spelling and punctuation should be assessed in relation to the range and ambition exhibited by the candidate. A piece of writing with a limited range of sentence structures and vocabulary may be free of errors, but will be rewarded less than a piece which demonstrates an ambitious range of sentence structures and vocabulary, albeit with some errors.

### **Procedure**

1. The piece of writing should be first assessed for assessment objectives (i) and (ii) combined. Using a “best fit” approach the piece should be placed within one of the five mark bands on page 90. Marks should not be related to grades at this stage.
2. The initial judgement should then be refined to a single mark out of 27. There are 6 marks available in all but the highest band. The lowest 2 marks within the band should be used if the piece of work is just into that band, and demonstrates some features of the band below; the middle 2 marks should be used if it is secure within the band; the top 2 marks should be used if the piece is at the top of the band and demonstrates some features of the band above.
3. The piece of work should then be assessed for assessment objective (iii). The initial judgement should place the work in one of the five mark bands, and this should then be refined to a single mark out of 13.
4. The two marks should then be added to arrive at a total mark out of 40.
5. The marks out of 27 and 13 should be recorded separately on the coursework frontsheet. (See *Appendix 3* of the specification), as well as the total mark out of 40.

**Assessment grid for personal/imaginative coursework: explore, imagine, entertain**

<b>Mark Band</b>	<b>Assessment Objectives (i) and (ii)</b>			
	<b>Column 1 Purpose and audience</b>	<b>Column 2 Effectiveness of communication</b>	<b>Column 3 Organisation</b>	<b>Column 4 Genre characteristics</b>
Band 1 0-7	little awareness of the purpose of the writing and of the intended reader is shown	the writing communicates at a basic level, using a limited vocabulary and showing little variety of sentence structure	organisation of the material is simple with limited success in opening and development	the writing achieves limited success in addressing at least one of the key terms within this triplet
Band 2 8-13	a basic grasp of the purpose of the writing and of the expectations/requirements of the intended reader is shown	the writing communicates in a broadly appropriate way, with some evidence of control in the choice of vocabulary and sentence structures.	organisation of the material shows some grasp of text structure, with opening and development, and broadly appropriate paragraphing and other sequencing devices	the writing conveys personal and/or creative ideas, themes and topics which target at least one of the key terms within the triplet
Band 3 14-19	a generally clear sense of purpose and understanding of the expectations/requirements of the intended reader is shown	the writing communicates clearly, with a well-chosen vocabulary, and some evidence of crafting in the construction of sentences	organisation of the material is mostly sound, with a clear text structure, controlled paragraphing to reflect opening, development and closure, together with successful use of cohesive devices (e.g. use of synonyms, repetition of words and structures, use of contrasts)	the writing presents and develops personal and/or creative ideas, themes and topics in a way which is designed to interest and/or entertain the reader
Band 4 20-25	a secure realisation of the writing task according to the writer's purpose and the expectations/requirements of the intended reader is shown	the writing communicates effectively, with an aptly chosen vocabulary and well-controlled variety in the construction of sentences	organisation of the material is secure, with a well-judged text structure, effective paragraphing and a range of cohesive devices between and within paragraphs	the writing succeeds in sustaining the interest of and/or entertaining the reader in its exploration or imaginative creation of ideas, themes and topics
Band 5 25-27	a strong, assured fulfilment of the writing task, sharply focused on the writer's purpose and the expectations/requirements of the intended reader is shown	the writing is compelling in its communicative impact, with an extensive vocabulary and skilful control in the construction of varied sentence forms	there is sophisticated control of text structure, skilfully sustained paragraphing and the assured application of a range of cohesive devices	the writing is compelling, showing originality, flair and individuality in its exploration or creation of ideas, themes and topics

**Assessment grid for personal/imaginative coursework: explore, imagine, entertain**  
**Assessment Objective (iii)**

<b>Mark Band</b>	<b>Punctuation</b>	<b>Grammar</b>	<b>Spelling</b>
Band 1 0-2	Basic punctuation is used with some control	Grammatical structuring shows some control	Spelling of common words is usually correct, though inconsistencies are present
Band 2 3-5	Full stops, capital letters, question marks are used, together with some other marks, mostly correctly	Grammatical structuring of simple and some complex sentences is usually correct	Spelling of simple words and more complex words is usually accurate
Band 3 6-8	Control of punctuation is mostly secure, including use of speech marks and apostrophes	Grammatical structures are accurate and used to create effects, with only occasional errors	Spelling of a wide range of words is accurate
Band 4 9-11	Punctuation is accurate, with a wide range of marks used to enhance communication, according to the particular focus within this triplet	A wide range of grammatical structuring is used accurately and effectively to create intended impact and to convey nuances of meaning	Spelling is almost always accurate, with only occasional slips
Band 5 12-13	Control of the full range of punctuation marks is precise, enabling intended emphases and effects to be conveyed (e.g. by the deployment of semi-colons, pairs of commas or dashes to indicate apposition or interpolation)	Grammatical structuring is ambitious and assured, with sophisticated control of expression and meaning	Spelling of a wide and ambitious vocabulary is consistently accurate

# Examples of students' work and moderator's comments

**Note:** The relationship between marks and grades is determined by the awarding committee for each round of the examination. Suggested grades on students' work are for guidance only.

Essay A.

English coursework Unit 1: Personal and imaginative writing

## *Déjà vu becomes Reality*

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She awoke startled. Sweat was pouring down her face and she was panting as if just finishing a mile run. She had had it again, that dream. Every night would come the same earth-shattering storm and the cry of the young boy from deep inside the wood. Diane was standing at the edge of the tree line as the piercing scream ran down her spine and drilled her entire body. It was here that her mind lost and her body sprinted forward into the darkness.

As she ran deeper, the trees began to thicken around her. The scream was still penetrating through the sheet of rain. Diane seemed to be nearing the shrill cry, when another noise would enter, breaking her concentration.

Repeatedly a figure would stalk her movements and try its hardest to prevent her from finding the boy. She would start to run, knowing that feeling of being gained upon. The run is only short, however, there is nowhere else for her to run. Then as the déjà vu becomes a reality in an entwined forest everything ends: blanked.

The steps creaked under her weight; Diane hated the loft. It always seemed so creepy and musty in there. She reached the top and fumbled for the old light switch. She flicked the catch and the small room lit up, thanks to the naked bulb in the centre. The room was tightly packed with old boxes from when she and her parents had moved in four months previously. Diane moved to a small parting in the mass and proceeded to move through them until she found her music books. She hated Annie for saying that they would perform the concert to Mrs. Coleson, the music teacher. No one had ever asked her, let alone told her, to provide the music. They were scheduled to perform the piece in less than a week.

As she moved, nearing the mounded corner, an old box over-spilling with letters and photographs caught her attention. Diane, forgetting why she was in the loft to begin with completely, moved, transfixed, towards the box. Diane bent down and picked up one of the old black and white photographs. A small boy, held by a pretty young lady dressed in a cream dress, smiled back at her. Diane became motionless as she stared at the photograph. She threw it down and grabbed the remaining pictures from the box: more of the boy and the lady. Then Diane noticed him; the dark figure who stood almost camouflaged in the background. In every one stood the same figure, the same haunting figure.

She knew. It didn't take Diane long to understand that these people were those who made up the characters in her dream.

Dropping them all to the floor but one, Diane ran back downstairs and into the kitchen where her mother was clearing away the plates from their afternoon meal. Diane's dad quickly followed with the last of the cutlery and began to help his wife wash the dishes.

He saw Diane. "You look as if you've just seen a ghost. You alright love?"

Diane showed him the photograph, the last of her clammy finger marks died away and her dad coughed uncomfortably. At this point Diane's mum turned around to see what had caused the silence and begun to turn pale. After a stifling silence she managed to whisper, "You tell her".

Diane's dad spoke raspily, "That was your brother, Matthew. He was murdered before you were born".

### **Commentary**

Narrative is one of many approaches to this unit. The ghost story is a popular genre with teenagers, sometimes with over predictable results, but this neatly crafted story builds up tension skilfully and delivers a punch at the end. The pace and the highly charged atmosphere are developed through apt and precise vocabulary ("transfixed", "her body sprinted forward into the darkness") and deft variation of sentence structure. The changes in tense in the third paragraph suggest the confusion of the dream. There is hardly a redundant word.

In terms of Assessment Objectives 1 & 2, the story is developed in a cohesive and dynamic way; thus it could be said to be "secure". The vocabulary is "aptly chosen", the sentences exhibit "well controlled variety" and the paragraphing is "effective". The writing engages and sustains the reader's interest throughout, though the ending is rather too abrupt. It lacks "flair" and "originality" but it certainly entertains. Hence it is best seen as in Band 4, 21 marks

In terms of Assessment Objective 3, a full range of punctuation marks - including colon and semi colon - is used correctly, the sentence structures are varied and assured, and the "wide and ambitious" vocabulary is spelt accurately. A mark within Band 5 is thus appropriate. 12 marks.

**Overall a mark of 33 would put this firmly in the A Grade.**

### **Essay B.**

**English coursework Unit 1: Personal and imaginative writing**

#### ***I am the lucky one (or am I?)***

I am lucky! I am fit, healthy, physically capable and able to do what I want. If I want to participate in the sport I choose I can! "The world is my oyster," so my Gran says. I have always been surrounded by people with a keen interest in sport. Able to participate in team games or individual activities, watching or playing, and getting a lot of pleasure from sport. I was however under the impression that there were people who could participate and those who couldn't. I have always considered them to be the less fortunate ones, these are people who have some form of disability not those who just choose not to be active.

It wasn't until I was given the opportunity to compete with fellow pupils who happened to have a disability in a competitive team that I realised there wasn't such a great divide, Sport is for All. School annually takes part in a competition



that involves teams of able-bodied and disabled pupils working in the environment to solve challenges The Kielder Challenge.

When the Kielder Challenge trials were mentioned in assembly my initial thoughts were, "You must be joking"! and "I'm not working with them", was some of the comments I was aware of. The number of pupils who went along to trials reflected this attitude I don't think this is a true reflection throughout the school but an attitude non-the less. I decided to give it the go, something different! Although pupils with disabilities are in school the only time I really notice them is when I get my ankles wrapped in the corridors, the sound of electric wheelchairs, funny noises in assembly, I had not really spent time talking to them.

The first time we met as a group having been selected from those who went along trials I walked into the sports hall and saw a boy in a manual wheelchair being towed along by another boy in an electric wheelchair, having great fun. As we walked in I sensed a reaction from the boys, they seemed embarrassed was that the same feelings as we had? Was it because they were disabled and we weren't? I was paired with one of the most physically disabled pupils in school at that time. I thought, "This is going to be difficult". He physically could do very little he couldn't talk walk and he dribbled!" This could be a complete disaster"! One of the aims of the Challenge is to work as a team everyone contributing I was beginning to panic! But you soon learn that everyone does have a role in the team and a positive part to play. I new how this worked in the game of hockey, I was soon to realise how it worked in the Challenge. A task was set, working in pairs, picking up blocks of wood which had a hook, not being able to touch the blocks with hands, staying outside the particular area and then carrying the blocks to another area, the equipment a piece of rope. Help! How were we going to do this, if you have no hand movement what do you do? I wondered if my partner sensed my anxiety. Other team members were happily picking up blocks with the rope each holding an end, So I asked his advice. He moved his eyes to the left. What's he doing? Oh no he's got a twitch as well! I was to later learn that if you are a bit lazy and speech is so difficult you find other ways to communicate, he was saying "tie it to the back of my chair and I will take it from there"! We never looked back!!

Other members of the team included three female able-bodied, in fact there was only one male able-bodied in either team, was this a reflection of the attitude of males in year ten or that the fairer sex were more sympathetic to others and prepared to have a go at a less elitist sport in school? The girls in the team were all sports enthusiasts and ready to have a go at anything. The Kielder Challenge had a certain reputation in school and we felt we would like to be a part of it.

The disabled team members could not have been more different, apart from their obvious disabilities. I cannot imagine what it must be like to walk on your toes and still be cheerful and determined. I got on well with our ambulant member of the team, he was a "sweetie", and I could have eaten him! He was very tactile and enjoyed a hug. He has already experienced major brain surgery twice but the only obvious sign was a nasty scar across his head. We didn't really appreciate his learning difficulties until he was asked to read a clue in one of the challenges, he couldn't. He was encouraged and helped and it really did make us stop and think how we take things for granted! A big cheer was all he needed when he succeeded. Our final team member was a wheelchair user and probably the one team member who found the most difficulty relating to us females. We won him round but I suppose just because he is in a wheelchair does not mean he feels any different towards older girls. I have always thought sports was for the able bodied and that sports means running, jumping, throwing, kicking, hitting but it really means any activity or game, all with the same objective ENJOYMENT if the sport does not bring joy and pleasure to the participant, what is the point in continuing the sport? Through enjoyment other benefits are derived, the Challenge sets out

to achieve many aims, social integration, emotional experiences, a sense of achievement and most of all enjoyment. It didn't take long to see how these aims would be achieved.

I never imagined that such fun could be had from solving problems in the environment and working with people that I had never considered teammates until the Kielder Challenge. The fun and enthusiasm for the competition started by the day we set off to compete, in fact we hadn't got through the school gates before the tape was on and it was "sing along with all of us"! – "I'll tell you what I want what I really want" comes to mind. This moved on to dancing not in the aisles but in the seats. This is how someone unable to walk does it all the time; we had come a long way from that first meeting!

It all became a reality and serious when we saw the signs of the competition emblazoned on the entrance to the Country Park. A deadly silence came over us all in the mini bus. Having recently watched some of the Special Olympics their motto came to mind "Let me win, but if I cannot win let me be brave in the attempt." When competing one can experience the joy of winning, disappointment in loosing and being able to accept defeat or victory with the same degree of sportsmanship, I hoped we could experience the joy.

The day brought its trials and tribulations, it proved to me that when the chips are down everyone does have a part to play and everyone did play their part. We knew that to do well we had to show that teamwork is the most important aspect of success. Everyone working equally, it doesn't matter if you move objects with your feet or with the wheels of your wheelchair the end result is the same. Try getting a football past a wheelchair goalkeeper!

We experienced the joy of winning in the heats and the disappointment of loosing in the semi-finals a greater contrast there could not have been. I thought I had let 'them' down. I had reverted back to my initial feelings, 'them and us'. I soon realised that no one had let anyone down, there always has to be winners and losers in a competition and although we had lost the competition we certainly were not losers! I know realize we all have something to offer someone else. I still get my ankles wrapped by the occasional wheelchair but it is called communication!

Since my Challenge experience I felt I would like to continue working with 'Special' pupils so as I enjoy music and dance I know they do, having lost my inhibitions we dance together at lunch times. Nothing too heavy, but we have fun. There always seems to be one of the group who is four beats behind the rest of us, we are going forwards he is still going back, does he care? No! Another member of the group spends a lot of time on her bottom so sings instead, I was told she had poor memory retention, she sings every word of every line of any song that we use, imagine if Twelfth Night was set to pop music what she could achieve! "If music be the food of love play on."

I have been fortunate to have experienced the integration of handicapped pupils and now realize that learning is a two-way thing, irrespective of disability. I wonder how many people can say that? It has made me realise that you have to look beyond the disability to the person behind it. I think if these pupils were not in school we would all find it more difficult to relate to them, I think we just take them for granted as we see them every day, pupils in schools where there is no integration may not think the same. Personally I would have felt uncomfortable wiping dribble from a thirteen year old boy (imagine how he must feel) if I had not got to know the person himself, he cannot help the dribbling. He is quite a character with a wicked sense of humour. I am lucky to have had this experience and not having difficulty accepting people for who they are not what they are. The philosophy of the Kielder Challenge is that the countryside has something to offer everyone, no matter what their interests or capabilities. I now know that everyone has something to offer regardless of how lucky we consider ourselves to

be. I may not have a physical disability but if I had been less fortunate would I have been as brave?

### **Commentary**

This is typical of the personal reflective writing which is entirely appropriate for this unit and often at its best when focused on a key moment when the writer acquires a new insight. This ambitious piece is written sufficiently well to convey a good sense of the writer's change of heart and mind which was brought about by a challenging experience. However it is weakened by loose sentence structures, uncertain punctuation and oddly spelt words, perhaps the result of careless use of a spell checker. There are also awkward changes of tense. On the other hand some unusual and effective vocabulary is used correctly, for instance 'ambulant' and 'tactile'. Overall it is a very uneven piece which would have benefited from editing; some of its impact is lost because of the frequent errors.

In terms of Assessment Objectives 1 & 2, there is "a generally clear sense of purpose"; "the writing communicates clearly" with "well chosen vocabulary", though the crafting of sentences is much weaker - only "some evidence of control" here. This uncertainty of structure is also reflected in the rather dense paragraphing, though the organisation of the material could be said to be "mostly sound". There is quite a good sense of audience, but, whilst the subject matter is well developed and aims to engage the reader, it is not entirely successful. A mark towards the top end of Band 3 is the best fit. 17 marks.

In terms of Assessment Objectives 3, the picture is again mixed. Clearer punctuation would help clarify meaning at times. The grammatical command suggests band 2 descriptors in some respects, in particular the loose structuring of sentences and the occasional failure to demarcate sentence endings by full stops. On the other hand the vocabulary is ambitious and the spelling (despite slips) is accurate. This is a piece of work that falls into almost all the bands, but the best fit is Band 3, 7 marks

**Overall 24 marks - a strong C.**

### **Essay C**

#### **English coursework Unit 1: Personal and imaginative writing**

#### ***A Shock***

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The person I've always been inspired by is my mum. She has always help me out and done all the best way out of all sorts of problems and has always help me out and done all the best things she could to looked after me. My mum has always had great patience with and only ever on the rare occasions would she lose her temper with me. My mum was always the best cook I know. All my life she's been my best friend. I can talk to my mum about anything in the world. Whenever I have a problem any problem, my mum just becomes super women and fixes it. Whenever I'm with my mum she is always a great laugh to be with. My mum can understand why I don't see her that often because she's working and I'm at that age where I enjoy going out a lot No matter what happens my mum always finds it her duty in any situation to make it alright for me. I don't live with my mum I haven't done for the last 2 ½ years because my parents have separated. I see my mum some weekends and we go out to dinner and get a film out of something. Get a film out or something. Just before the separation I had and idea something was going on and one day my dad said that he wanted to tell me something and he told me, "Mum an I well it looks like we're separating". I became a bit upset and went outside. That night I came back really late but when I came in my dad

didn't tell me off for coming back so late. He was alright about it because he knew what I was going through. I had strong feelings After that for several weeks. Now a days I don't think about it much I do sometimes but rarely.

### **Commentary**

The apparent purpose of this further example of personal narrative writing (often well suited to the less able candidate) is to convey the thoughts and feelings of the writer at a moment of shock, but the beginning suggests it is about a person who has been an inspirational influence. The result is a loosely structured piece, with a firm beginning and ending but somewhat random development in between. At the end, however, the reader has some sense of what happened and its significance.

In terms of Assessment Objectives 1 & 2, there is only "some awareness of purpose". The style is "broadly appropriate" with some attempt to choose appropriate words, within a limited range, and shape sentences, though uncertainly; at one stage a clause is repeated unintentionally. The lack of paragraphing is a serious weakness, but despite muddle and mistakes, the writer does attempt to explore and convey feelings. The writing falls into Band 2, 6 marks

In terms of Assessment Objectives 3, the control is insecure. Whilst there is evidence of the correct use of full stops, capital letters and (notably) apostrophes, there are also errors. Sentences are structured carefully within a somewhat restricted range, but there are serious mistakes in verb forms. In general, however, the spelling, punctuation and grammar could be described as mostly correct within the framework of a relatively straightforward piece of writing. Again a mark in Band 2 is appropriate, 3 Marks

**Overall the final mark is 9, a solid F.**

### **Essay D**

**English coursework Unit 2 (1203): Texts from different cultures & traditions**

#### ***How Does Harper Lee Explore the Issues Raised by Racial Prejudice In "To Kill A Mockingbird?"***

Harper Lee uses prejudice as one of the most prominent themes in the novel *To Kill A Mockingbird*. The examples of prejudice are mainly directed towards groups, for example the black community, or individuals in the Maycomb County, such as Tom Robinson. The prejudice throughout the novel is linked with ideas of fear, injustice and superstition.

We first see an example of racial prejudice in chapter 15 when the Lynch mob tried to prevent Tom Robinson gaining a court hearing, which could also be considered as a basic form of justice. This example is probably one of the fiercest forms of prejudice in the novel.

*To Kill A Mockingbird* is set in a time of economic depression, and therefore shows racial prejudice, especially from the white community of Maycomb society who are almost fearful of the black community, as they feel that living with them is a competition. In this time the blacks were legally able to have equal rights with the whites, even though the white people strongly disagreed with this. There is the belief of the white community that the blacks desired all that they had, including the white people's women. This shows the paranoia of Bob Ewell towards Tom Robinson over his daughter Mayella.

There are other examples of racial prejudice throughout the novel, which subtly show how the white people feel about the blacks in the society of Maycomb. For example, there is Aunt Alexandra's attitude towards Calpurnia, the Finch family's cook and housekeeper. Also there are the Missionary tea ladies'

comments about the black people when they speak about the “squalid lives of the Mrunas,” in chapter 24. Another example is the character Dolphus Raymond, who is white and married to a black woman, with half-caste children. He is thought of by the community as an alcoholic, yet he is in fact drinking from a covered bottle of Coca-Cola and wishes to be isolated from the community.

Maycomb is prejudicially divided by rigid beliefs about position and status in society. These classes are recognised by Jem in chapter 23, when he says that there are: “four kinds of folks in the world.” In Maycomb these strata are represented by the Finch family, who are considered as the white middle class stratum. The Cunninghams, who represent the badly hit farming community, the Ewells, who are considered the lowest class of the whites, and finally the black people, who are automatically seen as the bottom layer.

The trial brings out clearly the social divisions. The Ewells, who are known as “White Trash” within Maycomb society, would probably feel the most threatened by the black people, as they are considered so low that there is no definitely defined line between the black community and them. Therefore this brought about the trial case of the Ewells framing Tom Robinson for rape, as they knew they would win the case.

At the trial, Harper Lee explores the issues raised by racial prejudice, and uses this section of the novel to illustrate this important theme.

Harper Lee shows the different strata at the trial by having the black people waiting outside the courtroom awaiting the trial, whilst all of the white people were waiting in the shade. This is also evident when they are going into the courtroom, with the black people having to wait for the white people to enter first. The seating arrangements inside the courtroom illustrate this further with the white people sitting up in the gallery and the black people having to sit lower down and even on the floor. This scene finally ends with the unfair decision of the jury even after the evidence given by Atticus (the lawyer representing Tom Robinson) to prove his obvious innocence.

### **Commentary**

This question, on an English Literature set text, is well suited to this unit in its focus on the social/cultural background of the novel and would also be useful for the student in terms of improving knowledge and understanding of an examination text. It has elicited from the candidate a precise and well developed essay, which shows detailed knowledge of the book and, in its exploration of the topic, an ability to select, with some perception, relevant characters and incidents to support ideas. A wide range of reference is made and the quotations are neatly tailored to the context. Good comparisons and contrasts are drawn within the text. The essay could be developed further, but there is enough evidence of analytical and interpretative skill to merit a mark just inside the grade A borderline. **Overall, just a grade A.**

### **Essay E.**

**English coursework Unit 2 (1203): Texts from different cultures & traditions**

#### ***“To be different is to be an Outsider”***

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This essay will analyse the two following stories: “Black Boy” and “Mammies Form at the Post Office”.

The first story “Black Boy”, is about a woman who lives on her own as a single parent looking after her two young sons. She wants her eldest son to become independent and learn how to fend for himself and be able to deal with any situation he may run into because she knows she won’t always be there for him and also because her children are growing up in a racist area. There are many different ways in which we can see these differences. These include language,

customs, traditions, beliefs, experiences, and lifestyle. People have different languages and accents which is like their own code of community with people within their own society. Their customs may be different because, as an example, here, we shake hands to greet people but for people who have a different culture or religion they will do other things like how their heads or kiss on the cheek.

To be a minority in a dominant culture must make people feel scared to walk around on their own, scared to socialize with others due to peer or harassment. They may feel left out like an out-cast in the area or paranoid that people are talking about them and watching their every move. In short to be different is to be an outsider. This issues explores by the author of "Black Boy". The boy doesn't realise that his 'difference' is causing any problem. The only one that does realise it is his mother and she is trying to make him understand what she already knows. When his mother tells him he'll have to start doing the grocery shopping, the author shows that he feels proud about this. He states "I was proud; I felt like a grown up". Little did he know what was about to happen next. However, his mother knew. She knew he was likely to get harassed but she wanted him to know that these kinds of things would happen to him as he grew up. (She is clearly upset with the situation of having a different culture that is causing problem.) The author says "When she returned at evening she would be tired and disciplined and would cry a lot".

When the boys mother sends him out to do the shopping he gets harassed by some boys who we assume are white because of the explicit title. They took his money and send him home terrified. We are made aware of this because the boy says, "So full of fear I could scarcely breathe". When he reached home and told his mother what had just happened she didn't say or do anything expect to write another list and give him more money. However, the same thing happened twice more. The third time around his mother gave him a long and heavy stick and told him not to come back into the house without the groceries and if he did then she would whip him. He couldn't understand why she was saying this. He didn't realise it was for his own good. His mother didn't choose to speak to him so aggressively. It was more out of necessity than choice. If she was to speak to him calmly, kindly or sympathetically then he would think he would always have someone to turn to or confide in but his mother knows that it doesn't work that way. It is most likely that his mother was hurting more than he was but he wasn't aware of this.

The boy is so frustrated with his mother. He begs her to let him do the shopping another day but she is persistent and determined to make him overcome his fears.

In the end the boy fights back with strong violence. He probably sees it as giving back what he got. With the big stick his mother gave him he hits the boys in the head several times until they run from him. The boys are shocked by his behaviour because as they see black people of a lesser class to themselves they therefore expect them to be weak and not have the strength or ability to fight back. Even though the boys were running from him, he still ran after them telling them to come back for more to make them scared to ever trouble him again but instead their parents came out and threatened him but he threatened them back telling them he would give them the same treatment he gave their sons. It was the first time he had ever shouted at adults but by telling them this he was letting them know that they can't mistreat him like that.

The lifestyle of this young boy, his mother and brother shows the reader the difference between themselves and the society that they're living in. At the beginning of the story the boy says that his mother "finally went to work" which could suggest that she had had a hard time finding a job. Also it's almost like they're living in poverty because during the days the boys are only left a loaf of bread and a pot of tea.

In this text I think the author is saying that you have to realise that the race or culture you belong to can sometimes cause conflict depending on what society you live in. If your race or culture is non-dominant in the society then that's when the problems may start. The author is saying that you don't just have to sit back and "grin and bear it", you can do something about it even if it means using violence.

However, in the second story, "Mammies Form at the Post Office", it seems like the author is saying that sometimes you do just have to put up with it. Maybe there's not always a way to deal with it or maybe some people are too old and frail to make a fuss of the situation. This story is about a woman who wants to send money back to her native country in the West Indies. She, among others, is made to feel like a criminal when she sees that most of the counters are closed with a bullet-proof glass covering each one. She is embarrassed by this. She also finds it offensive.

When she reaches the counter and tells the boy what she wants, she is made to feel incompetent by the sarcastic attitude of the boy. For example, Mammie says she wants to send money home, the boy says doesn't she want to send abroad? The boy speaks to her in these overtone and undertone manners by which she gets frustrated. She wants the money to get to this particular country the same day so she asks the boy if this will happen when he suggests sending the money by telegraph letter. His reply is, "It'll get there in a few days. I mean it's not exactly urgent is it?" This is one of the times where she seems to get exasperated with him.

The boy doesn't understand that in Mammies culture it may be tradition for a member of the family to be in charge of the grave of another family member and organize payment for any damages immediately. He is being extremely ignorant and not listening to what she has to say and is probably enjoying making a fool out of her. She feels there is nothing else she can do. She is very tired and still has to go home to cook which brings me back to the point made earlier that sometimes you're just not able to deal with situation like this so instead of creating a scene you just leave it and make another attempt at what you want to do until you move progressively along.

### **Commentary**

Again the topic is very appropriate for this unit. If short stories are used, the new specification requires the study of a number of short stories; in its use of two stories, this piece meets the minimum requirement for an acceptable essay base. This is quite a lengthy essay, which might have gained from editing and a sharper focus on the subject. It deals quite thoroughly with 'Black Boy' though the approach lacks precision. There is a tendency to narrate and write about the topic generally, but a number of relevant points are also made, which show an understanding of character and situation, and sometimes these are related thoughtfully to the theme. The second story is dealt with in a sketchier manner but again some points are made. The essay needs a conclusion, perhaps summing up the comparative points. The degree of insight, despite a tendency to describe and narrate, together with the candidate's evident grasp of the texts make a mark in the C range appropriate. **Overall, a mid C.**

## Essay F

### English coursework Unit 2 (1203): Texts from different cultures & traditions

Of Mice and Men  
John Steinbeck

#### **Notes on Characters**

I have discovered this about Lennie.

Big with the mind of a child he can't remember things he is not very clever he is strong he always copies Georges actions he like animals and he loves beautiful things in nature. he cause the trouble. he has a very deep voice he dos not know how strong he is.

I have discovered this about George.

He has travelled for many months, to find jobs but because lennie is so stupid he can't look after heself he does not get the jobs  
He is loyal to lennie he dos not tell Lennie things because he rather forget it or tell outhr people. He always shouteing at lenning. George like to think that lennie is going to be the best worker in the ranch George and Lennie hope to get a farm together when they get some money.

I have discovered this about Slim.

he is good looking he does not like playing games.

I have discovered this about Crooks.

Crooks is a negro he was a stable buck crook never came out of the stable he looks after horses crooks was a cripple but he was more permont than other men crooks possesd several paire of shoes he had a lot of books he had a crooked spine he was a proud aloof man crooked face was lined with deep black wrinkles and he had thin paintightened lips which were lighter than his face.

I have discovered this about Curley

Curley is little he hates big guys he is always picking scraps with big guys he dos'nt give nobody a chance. But nobody will pick scraps with him because his dad is the boss. Curley always lookes for someone to pic on. Curley pic on lennie and lennie backs off so george said to lennie hit him back so lennie grabbed curley hand and george said tell eneyone and we will tell everyone that you got hit by lennie.

I have discovered this about Curley's wife.

She is fashionable she wheres a lot of mack up she is a tart she is pritty but she is a fleat. She always makes excuses up and she would go on the site.

#### **Commentary**

The worksheet format has allowed a less able candidate to write about all the main characters of the novel. The points are basic, sometimes limited to physical features, but others show some grasp of situations and characters. Ideas (perhaps provided for the writer) are asserted rather



than proved, and there are no quotations to support them. Occasionally there are signs of some ability to reason and infer; for instance we are told that George has travelled for many months because "lennie is so stupid he can't look after heself". Overall there is just enough awareness and understanding of character to allow a mark in the F range.

## Essay G

### English coursework Unit 3: A play by Shakespeare

#### English Literature coursework Unit 1: The pre-twentieth century Drama unit

#### ***Examine how Shylock is presented in 'The Merchant of Venice'.***

The play 'The Merchant of Venice' operates on numerous issues including, racism, prejudice, law and order and persecution, although it is heavily based on anti-semitism. It could be disputed however, that the play itself is not anti-semitic. The victim of this hostility is a greedy moneylender called Shylock who makes a profession of lending money in return for interest. We will examine throughout this essay in depth how this Jew is portrayed. Our opinions of him are ambiguous though because we are manipulated by society attitude towards him and his own attitude towards others during the whole play.

It is important to reflect upon Act I, Scene iii because it is the first time Shylock appears. We begin to visualise the inherent perplexity that lies throughout the entire play – his divided personality. Our initial impression of Shylock is not clear-cut although his first remark of, 'Three thousand ducats', sums up his whole nature of greed. We dislike him at this point because he seems to be taking advantage of Bassanio, who has hypocritically approached Shylock for a loan to Antonio:

"Three thousand ducats for three months, and Antonio bound." (Iiii9-10)  
Shylock reveals in his position and argues the valid point of Antonio being a hypocrite. This influences us to sympathise with Shylock, along with the knowledge of how he is treated by Christians and in specific Antonio:

"Signior Antonio, many a time and oft....

... I'll lend you thus much moneys'?" (Iiii103-121)

Shylock reminds Bassanio and Antonio how he has been spat on and discriminated against because he is a Jew. However, we see that Shakespeare's display of Shylock is self-contradictory because in this same scene we are indicated towards Shylock's religious intolerance towards Christians:

"I hate him for he is a Christian....

... cursed be my tribe

If I forgive him." (Iiii30-49)

Facing the completion of the speech however, we learn he has been wronged by Christians and that he is retaliating against their treatment of him because the prejudice acts in both directions. Antonio has persecuted Shylock for years because of his beliefs. His inferiority brings a certain inevitability about the play because Elizabethan not only detest the Jewish religion but they also dislike the lending of money for a profit.

Launcelot presents Shylock very negatively, but we have to take into account the fact that he is an unreliable source. He deceives his blind father and refers to Shylock as a devil:

"To be ruled by my conscience,

I should stay with the

Jew my master, who God bless the mark – is a kind of devil." (Iiii21-24)

Launcelot must have his justifications for calling his master a devil, although his reasons could be related to his ignorance of Jews. When Shylock is quarrelling with Launcelot who is ready to depart to work for Bassanio, Shylock informs him

that he will no longer be able to eat, sleep or be lazy any more. This remark contradicts Launcelot's words:

"Give him a halter. I am famished in his service; you may tell every finger I have with my ribs." (Iiii102-10)

Launcelot is claiming he has become thin in the Jew's service, yet you believe Shylock over Launcelot because he teases his own father.

Shylock is intransigent when he is invited to dine with Bassanio because he does not consume pork as part of his religion. Eventually, Shylock agrees to attend the supper even if it is in malice "to feed upon" the 'prodigal Christian.' He considers a Christian's idea of merriment as 'shallow foppery' and 'vile squealing'. This implies that he is sober and dull. His attitude is disliked but only up to a certain degree because we admit how he stands up for his morals, principles and on the whole himself.

Shylock's daughter Jessica is presented generally positively even though she is a Jew. This works against Shylock because she is used to contrast her father. Therefore Christians can like Jews, but this is because she is prepared to convert into a Christian. We pity Shylock because his daughter abandons him to marry a Christian:

"Farewell, and if my fortune be not crossed,  
I have a father, you a daughter lost." (Iiv56-5)

Jessica is a second opinion to support Launcelot because she condemns Shylock. She has her fault though because she steals from her own father, therefore she is an unreliable source. Jessica's behaviour brings out the worst in Shylock and we are shown his fixation for money:

"Why there, there, there, there....  
... and the jewels in her ear." (IIIi79-84)

Shylock is angry with Jessica and he would rather his daughter were dead with his jewels at his feet. His speech is made directly after Solanio and Salerio have been bantering him though.

Shylock is insistent upon not exhibiting mercy to Antonio because he lives by the motto of, 'an eye for an eye'. If an individual does you wrong, they must receive the same treatment. When Salerio inquires, 'Why take flesh at all?' Shylock replies with a speech concerning the equality of Jews and Christians:

"Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions....  
... If you poison us do we not die?  
And if you wrong us shall we not revenge?" (IIIi54-6)

Shylock is a victim who deserves sympathy because he is the same as a Christian and yet they treat him dissimilarly.

Shylock's religion dictates that he must pursue revenge and that he must not dismiss an agreement

"I'll have my bond. I will not hear thee speak.  
I'll have my bond, and therefore speak no more." (IIIiii12-14)

In this confrontation between Shylock and Antonio, Antonio soon resigns. He knows the law will take its order because as a merchant he relies upon it. They both know that the law of Venice and the population who inhabit Venice are equal. The law applies to all and it ensures everyone is identical and therefore the city is prosperous. It is ironic that it is subsequently the law that condemns Shylock.

The trial scene is inevitable for Shylock because the weight of people are against him. From the beginning he does not receive a fair trial because the Duke is prejudiced against him. Also, Portia is not a qualified lawyer and the court is swayed against a Jew. Antonio is Bassanio's closest acquaintance who is married to Portia, therefore she is very manipulative towards Shylock and she deceives him. He knows he is privileged by law to his bond and he will not compromise. Portia therefore proposes an escape route she knows he will not accept because she is aware of the consequences.

We dislike Shylock when he sharpens his knife in front of the court and Antonio. Also, when he is prepared to plunge the knife into Antonio's chest. His behaviour is farfetched because no matter what the Christians have done to him, they have never gone this far. Portia has manipulated him to this stage and when she informs him that not a drop of Christian blood may be shed, she knows he cannot fall back on the escape route offered previously. As Shylock is ignorant of this, he wants three times the bond in exchange but he has lost even the original loan.

His life is spared but the Christians have displayed themselves to be bigots and Shylock did not receive equal charity in his trial. The Christians asked him to show mercy but they offered little themselves. Shylock must convert into a Christian and half of his money belongs to Jessica and Lorenzo and the other half is theirs when he dies. Shylock has been destroyed by a manipulative woman and he has been brought to his own kind of death which in his eyes is worse than dying because both his money and religion are lost to Christianity.

Shakespeare's presentation of Shylock was very much influenced by the period he lived in, a time that favoured Christians. Therefore, it is surprising to find a Jew in his play who is often portrayed as a human being and not always as an illegal alien. Like any human being, he had his faults but being a Jew was not one of them as many of his compatriots liked to think.

His strong religious beliefs dictated his life and he never for a moment turned his back on them. Instead, he let them condemn him into a Christian with only half the amount of money he had as a Jew.

### **Commentary**

The topic is a broad one which allows the candidate freedom of approach and interpretation. A weaker candidate than this would need some scaffolding points to structure the argument, but there are no signs of looseness in this well written and closely argued essay, which tracks Shylock's role throughout the whole play, supporting points with careful and apt quotations. The argument is objective and very precisely balanced, evaluating his character from differing viewpoints; the analysis covers these "alternative interpretations" (Grade A descriptor). The detailed textual references and extensive use of quotation show close attention to the language. Points are carefully explained. Shylock's character is analysed fully, as is our response to him, in the light of what he says and does, and what other characters say about him. There is plenty of evidence of analytical and interpretative skill

**Overall this is a solid A, meeting the descriptors for both English and English Literature.**

### **Essay H**

**English coursework Unit 3: A play by Shakespeare**

**English Literature coursework Unit 1: The pre-twentieth century Drama unit**

#### ***Much Ado About Nothing***

***Explore the development of Claudio's character in the following scenes, looking closely at his language. Does he win the audience's sympathy?***

- 1. Act 1 scene 1, lines 150 ff. where he speaks of his love for the first time*
- 2. Act 2 scene 1, lines 140ff including the "beauty is a witch" speech*
- 3. Act 3 scene 2, where Claudio hears Don John say that Hero is unfaithful*
- 4. Act 4 scene 1, the wedding, where Claudio denounces her as a "rotten orange"*
- 5. Act 5 scene 1, where lines 230ff, where Claudio offers to make amends for Hero's death*
- 6. Act 5 scene 4, the second wedding scene*

Claudio's character is generally calm and relaxed; he is idealistic in the fact that he puts his women on a pedestal especially Hero. He is incredibly loyal to both friends and women and shows this through his language as he speaks fairly and very sincerely as though he is speaking straight from the heart. He speaks this way about Hero in act one, scene one, he says, "She is not a modest young lady". This is based on his first impressions of Hero as signor Leonato's daughter, he sees her immediate good side and finds no fault with her. He shows later on in the scene just how much he admires her by comparing her with a jewel. "Can this world buy such a jewel". This instantly creates a romantic image and a strong metaphor which shows he is already deeply in love with her. He compliments this statement with another that confirms his thoughts as he says, "In mine eyes she is the sweetest lady that I ever looked on".

In his next speech which is spoken in verse as Claudio always does, (Benedick always speaks in prose) he says the line, "for beauty is a witch". This quote is a typical line for Claudio to say as it shows exactly what he is thinking about Hero and about what he thinks of the situation. He is also able to show what he thinks of her with the fact he did find her beautiful, and the next few lines show what the thought of her, "against whose charms, faith melted into blood". With the use of the word "blood" on that sentence he created a dramatic ending to the lines before. In this he is saying that with those charms and good looks that he has seen has also attracted the eye of another man. He also shows that he will dismiss his chances with her, almost admitting defeat towards the other man, by the last line that is, "farewell therefore Hero". With this use of language he creates different feelings, firstly the feeling of hurt and heartache and then the feeling of loss and sympathy so this is one line that he is able to get sympathy from the audience both in the book and with the reader.

In scene three when Don Jon tells Claudio that Hero has been unfaithful the way he says, "...The Lady is disloyal". It makes the statement more dramatic and causes the perfect reaction from Claudio in the way that he simply answers back with, "Who Hero?" his next reaction after this simply "Disloyal?" this makes him sound surprised and shocked. It also sounds like he does not know what to do next apart from listen to the rest of the shocking news. This again gets sympathy from the audience as the whole scene creates pathos for Claudio but shows another side to him as instantly believes Don Jon over Hero and will not listen to her to change his mind. The next speech that Claudio makes is showing that he is full of revenge and says that in the place that he will marry her he will shame her instead. So this shows that he is willing to show her up for the mistakes that she made and that he made for getting involved with her.

The speech entitled "the rotten orange speech", is Claudio is talking to Leonato, Hero's father, about her and what she has done to him. It is his way of describing what she did to him and this is how he is getting over it.

He opens the speech by saying, "There Leonato, take her back again", he says with a tone of disgust and is showing at this point that he will not have anything more to do with her, is a response to her hurting him, as he was so in love with her. The next line is more insulting towards Hero as he says, "Give not this rotten orange to your friend"; Claudio is trying to show how hurt he is by what Hero has supposedly done to him by insulting her and comparing her to a rotten orange. He could have chosen this word as it does give the picture of a used, old orange that nobody would want anymore and it fits in nicely to the surrounding speech. Other words used in the speech like, "cunning sin" and "blood" and "evidence", all give a dramatic and suspense feel to the play and to the reader.

Through out the play Claudio is able to retrieve sympathy and understanding from both the characters around him and the readers of the play, as he is such an honest and sincere character himself. He produces himself to be honourable and loyal character towards both men and women throughout the play.

He is able to do this through his language also and through being sincere with his language. For example in the way he speaks about Hero and the way that he shows he is distraught when she is set up to be unfaithful. Compared to other characters in the play like Benedick or Don Pedro, Claudio is seen to be the most kind, caring, generous and sincere. This creates sympathy from the reader and surrounding characters as well and with a lot of pathos as well.

### **Commentary**

This carefully structured topic covers both the requirement to write on a whole text and comment on language, by inviting an exploration of the degree to which Claudio retains our sympathy throughout the play, and to look at the ways in which his language develops and varies. Unfortunately the candidate does not take advantage fully of the opportunities offered. The essay begins rather generally, but quickly makes some apt points supported by quotation (regrettably inaccurate) with a perceptive comment on imagery. In the second paragraph the focus is still on language but in an increasingly vague way. However, a personal interpretation of Claudio's character is developing, though not entirely confidently and with some somewhat questionable inferences. The conclusion is decisive in its assertion of opinion, though the case has not been convincingly argued. Overall it is a personal answer that attempts an interpretation, which shows some understanding. It refers to aspects of language to support ideas, but there is no real depth to the answer. As such it falls into the D grade.

**Overall a high D, meeting the descriptors for both English and English Literature.**

### **Essay I.**

**English Coursework Unit 3: A play by Shakespeare**

**English Literature coursework Unit 1: The pre-twentieth century Drama unit**

### ***How would you define the character of Henry V as he appears in the play?***

There is a boy who is 20 years old as he has got older he has made a great use of his early days. He gets furious and bad tempered when people mock him. He is a very sharp boy, he is clever he has charm etc.... You can tell he's clever because he knows he will never get a war without death. Henry V is a man who has got intelligence. Henry avoids responsibility. He has the rightfulness of crown of France, he gives money for the troops he supports the church nobles. Henry V is in complete control of everything including his friends etc... Henry V risks his life in the war to do what he has to, he has a cold, manipulative mind.

Henry V despises when he tells jokes it will not mean much when more people will weep than rather laugh at his jokes.

He is very cross that the Dauphin sent him tennis balls as a present. He will get him back for it when he takes over France.

He talks about God a lot as if he always wants to do what God wants. I think what God and Henry wants is the same thing.

### **Commentary**

The candidate here might have benefited from the structured approach illustrated in the previous essay title. The essay is brief and does not cover the whole play. Some specific points emerge but they are unsupported by quotation. Little more than a general awareness of the play and a basic understanding of Henry's character is shown. A mark just inside the F grade is appropriate.

**Overall, a low F, meeting the descriptors for both English and English Literature.**

# GCSE English Literature 1213

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## General comments

The content is as follows:

- **Prose:** the study of substantial texts published before and after 1914.
- **Poetry:** comparative study, featuring poems published before and after 1914.
- **Drama:** the study of works published before and after 1914.

This course allows students to respond to a wide range of texts from the literary tradition and from contemporary writing. For the first time, literary non-fiction texts are included in the scheme of assessment, as an option. Thus in the terminal examination, the new literary non-fiction texts may replace any one of the other three sections (post 1914 poetry, post 1914 prose and post 1914 drama).

Edexcel will provide a free pre-released anthology of poetry for each candidate. This is a joint anthology for use also with Edexcel GCSE English (1203, 1204, 5203). The texts for the examination have been chosen to provide a balance: some of the most popular texts from the previous syllabus are retained to offer centres continuity while new texts provide a range of backgrounds, writers and styles. As previously, several of them lead neatly into the *Different Cultures* coursework unit for GCSE English. There will be questions on all the texts for both Foundation and Higher tier candidates. The scheme of assessment is summarised below:

## Summary of scheme of assessment

	<b>Coursework 30%</b>
Written and Oral Coursework Portfolio (both tiers)	<b>Three units</b> Pre-1914 Drama unit (10%) Pre-1914 Prose unit (10%) Pre-1914 Poetry unit (10%)
<b>Paper 2F or 3H</b>	<b>Terminal Examination 70% - 2 1/4 hours</b>
2F (Foundation Tier) or 3H (Higher Tier)	<b>Written examination paper</b> <b>Section A:</b> Post-1914 Poetry <b>Section B:</b> Post-1914 Prose <b>Section C:</b> Post-1914 Drama <b>Section D:</b> Literary Non-fiction Candidates answer <b>three</b> questions, each from a different section.

This specification offers centres the choice of teaching English Literature independently of English or as part of an integrated course. There are links with Edexcel GCSE English (1203, 1204 and 5203) which enable candidates to enter coursework units for both specifications. These and other “crossover” opportunities are on page 17 of this guide.

## English Literature Coursework

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### General comments

The coursework element of this specification is worth 30% of the total marks. The three compulsory units are equally weighted, as follows:

Pre 1914 Drama – 10%

Pre 1914 Prose – 10%

Pre 1914 Poetry – 10%

- There is no longer a requirement for any **hand-written coursework**.
- There is no longer a requirement to assess the **quality of written communication** (formerly spelling, punctuation and grammar) within coursework: this will be assessed in the terminal examination.
- The submission of **incomplete coursework** is discussed on page 16 of the Specification.
- A **written unit** may consist of a single piece or a number of coherently related pieces of writing.
- The coursework frontsheet will require identification of which unit, or units, address **assessment objective AO4** (*relate texts to their social, cultural and historical contexts and literary traditions*). This assessment objective may be demonstrated in separate units (for example, one unit might address “social, cultural and historical context”, while another might relate to “literary tradition”), or in one.
- Full guidance on **how to assess coursework** appears on pages 15 to 22 of the Specification.
- One unit of coursework may be assessed **orally**. Where oral responses are assessed, some accompanying evidence written by the candidate must be available for moderation. Oral responses presented for assessment may take various forms, for example performance, monologue, role-plays, or simulations. Assessment must be based on the assessment criteria and the objectives for English Literature as specified in the assessment grid for individual units (Pages 18 to 21 of the Specification). Form B (Appendix 4 of the Specification), the Oral Coursework Frontsheet should be used.
- Teachers should be alert to work derived from other sources – such as the internet – when signing the **declaration of authentication** on the frontsheet (see Specification, page 41).
- **There is no set length, or word limit, for coursework units**: what is appropriate will be determined by the nature of the assignment and by the approach and capacity of the student.
- To support centres’ assessment of coursework, Edexcel will produce **exemplar folders of coursework** each year. There will also be a series of **assessment support meetings** for teachers of the specification each autumn. These meetings will support teachers in their assessment of both English and English Literature. It is a requirement of the specification that each centre be represented at an assessment support meeting, normally by the Teacher Examiner. The annually produced material will complement the examples offered elsewhere in this Guide.

## The coursework units

### Unit 1: Pre 1914 Drama

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(See also the comments on *English Coursework Unit 3, work based on a play by Shakespeare, page 34*)

- Work in this unit must derive from the study of at least one play by a major playwright, such as Shakespeare, Marlowe, Jonson, Congreve, Goldsmith, Sheridan, Shaw and Wilde.
- In practice, for many centres this will be a “crossover” piece with the Shakespeare unit for GCSE English. A single unit can serve the needs of both specifications; care should be taken, however, to ensure that both sets of requirements and assessment objectives are met.
- The unit must require candidates to explore how language, structure and forms contribute to the meanings of text(s), considering different approaches to text(s) and alternative interpretations. This might be achieved through an assignment which asks for a discussion of different views of the themes of the play or one which focuses on different interpretations of character. This unit should encourage students to put forward hypotheses and support them with evidence from the text(s). (AO2)
- When setting assignments teachers should remember that Assessment Objective 4: *candidates must demonstrate their ability to relate texts to their social, cultural and historical contexts and literary traditions* must be shown in at least one of the coursework units. Some of the examples below suggest how that requirement could be met in this unit.
- Teachers should ensure that assignments enable candidates to show response to the text as a whole, even when the starting point is a scene or extract.
- Where film or other performance versions of the play are used in an assignment, candidates should be enabled to demonstrate knowledge of the play as a written text, not as media versions alone. Assignments which focus on how a film version interprets the text are therefore acceptable.

#### Examples of assignments

All of the assignments relate to AO1, and many of them to AO2. Particular reference is drawn to AO3 and AO4, where applicable.

- What view of love and marriage is presented in *The Taming of the Shrew*? How might a modern audience respond to the social and cultural context of this theme? (AO4)
- Is Eliza Doolittle in *Pygmalion* any better off at the end of the play than she was at the beginning? You should consider the social and cultural setting of the play in your answer. (AO4)
- How might Wilde’s *The Importance of being Earnest* be produced to interest a modern audience?
- A study of Shakespeare’s presentation of parents in more than one play, such as Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, Lord Capulet in *Romeo and Juliet*, the King in *Henry IV Part One*. (AO3)
- What different attitudes towards love and war are presented to the audience in Shaw’s *Arms and the Man*? (AO4)
- A study of a film version of *Romeo and Juliet*, comparing interpretations of character with the students’ own views from reading the text.

**See page 101 for examples of students’ responses to this unit, and accompanying commentaries.**



## Unit 2: Pre 1914 Prose

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- This unit may be based on work by any major writer or writers published before 1914. The list on page 36 of the National Curriculum suggests the range of acceptable writers, though this is not prescriptive for *English Literature*.
- The assignment must enable candidates to respond to text(s) critically, sensitively and in detail, selecting appropriate ways to convey their response, using textual evidence as appropriate.
- Teachers should ensure that imaginative extension of texts address the relevant Assessment Objectives.
- Where short stories are used, they should form a substantial collection (at least 5 or 6 stories) on a theme or by a single writer. The assignment should require candidates to discuss at least two of the selected short stories, with the opportunity to study more if desired.
- This unit offers scope for work based on an imaginative/empathetic response, or for a more analytical approach.
- Teaching approaches might include teaching one or more texts to a class as a whole; or inviting students to base their work on one or more texts of their own choice, with teacher guidance where appropriate.
- When setting assignments teachers should remember that AO4 (*candidates must demonstrate their ability to relate texts to their social, cultural and historical contexts and literary traditions*) must be shown in at least one of the coursework units. Some of the examples below suggest how that requirement could be met in this unit.
- Teachers should ensure that assignments enable candidates to show response to the text as a whole, even when the starting point is an extract.
- Where film or other performance versions of texts are used, candidates should be enabled to demonstrate knowledge of the novel/ short stories etc. as written texts, not as “media” versions alone. Assignments which focus on how a film interprets a text are therefore acceptable.
- The “cut-off” date of 1914 (previously 1900) means that some popular texts have now become eligible. For example, Edith Wharton’s *Ethan Frome* (1911) lends itself to a range of possible approaches, particularly for the “cultural” element of AO4.

### Examples of assignments

- All of these assignments relate to AO1, and many of them to AO2. Particular reference is drawn to AO3 and AO4, where applicable.
- In general, the most successful coursework units are those where the demands of the assignment and the candidates’ abilities are well matched. Appropriate assignment setting is vital. For example, very able students do not need the straightjacket of an overly prescriptive task, and would be able to respond to “How does Hardy create a sense of place in *Wessex Tales*?” or “Discuss the theme of social ambition in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*”, while weaker candidates would struggle. For the less able a much more structured, or narrowly focused, task may be preferable: for example in *The Clubfooted Grocer* by Conan Doyle, and *The Signalman* by Dickens, we are presented with two memorable characters, Mr Stephen Maple and the signal man. How do the writers use dialogue to build up a picture of the two characters?” For the most limited candidates, even a simple narrative approach may be appropriate: “In chapter 52 of *Far from the Madding Crowd* Bathsheba says “I have never been free from trouble since I lived here.” How does the writer show us that the other characters cause trouble for Bathsheba?”

### Other coursework suggestions:

- Examine the portrayal of family life in the society described by George Eliot in *Silas Marner*. (AO4)

- Compare and contrast the ways in which writers present the supernatural in at least two nineteenth century stories, such as *The Red Room* by H.G. Wells and *The Withered Arm* by Thomas Hardy. (AO1, AO2, AO3)
- How does Hardy portray the role of female characters in society in at least two of his short stories? (AO3, AO4). For candidates requiring more support, characters might be specified and some direction offered – dialogue, the presentation of particular relationships, the balance between men and women in the society of the time, and so on.
- Discuss Hardy’s presentation of village life in the nineteenth century, in *Far From The Madding Crowd* or *Under the Greenwood Tree* (AO1, AO4). Again, this could be rephrased, with a narrower focus, to offer candidates more structure and support: “In *Far from the Madding Crowd* the major characters act out their dramas against a background of village life. What do you learn from this novel about the daily lives of characters such as the Coggans, Joseph Poorgrass, Cain Ball and Liddy?”
- Compare the presentation of the leading male characters in *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* (AO1, AO3)
- Magwitch’s view of Pip (i) at the beginning of *Great Expectations* and (ii) when Magwitch is on his deathbed. You should bring out the changes you have seen in Pip growing up in nineteenth century England. (AO1, AO2, AO4). This calls for an “imaginative” response, but it is sufficiently focused and challenging to ensure that assessment objectives are addressed.
- How does Swift present his views of England of the time in *Gulliver’s Travels*? You should consider how he uses imaginary worlds; size and scale; a first person narrator; irony and satire. You may restrict your answer to two Books of *Gulliver’s Travels* (AO1, AO2, AO4). This would stretch able candidates and yet offers direction and focus. The excellent English and Media Centre edition of the text, with its equal focus on both the printed text and the film realisation, has made *Gulliver’s Travels* accessible at this level.

**See page 123 for examples of students’ responses to this unit, and accompanying commentaries.**

## English Literature coursework Unit 3: Pre 1914 Poetry

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- This unit must be based on a study of a substantial collection of pre-1914 poetry. Teachers should devise their own units (drawing on the suggestions below, if appropriate) in order to meet the following requirements:
  - a) The poems should form a coherent collection of about 15 to 20 shorter poems, or a smaller number of longer or more complex poems, linked by theme, poet(s) or form.
  - b) The assignment should range across the collection, referring to about five or six poems, though not all poems need receive equal treatment.

### Notes

1. There is no requirement to have the collection approved by Edexcel beforehand.
  2. There is no requirement to study a set number of poets. The collection may focus on the work of one or two poets, or may range across the work of several.
  3. A detailed comparison of two or three poems, dealt with in some depth, with less detailed reference to a few others to show breadth of study, would meet requirement b) above.
- The assignment must enable candidates to respond critically and sensitively to a range of poems and to show understanding of how meanings and ideas are conveyed through language, structure and form. (AO1, AO2)
  - In this unit candidates should “*explore relationships and comparisons between texts, selecting and evaluating relevant material.*” In order to meet this requirement it is important that the assignment highlights the need for comparison. (AO3)
  - When setting assignments teachers should remember Assessment Objective 4: ‘*Candidates must demonstrate their ability to relate texts to their social, cultural and historical contexts and literary traditions*’ must be shown in at least one of the coursework units. Some of the examples below suggest how that requirement could be met in this unit. The poetry unit is particularly apt for demonstrating awareness of literary tradition, since it can deal with several poems written over time.

### Examples of assignments

- A comparison of the ways writers have used poetic forms, such as the sonnet or ballads, to express a variety of ideas and emotions in different historical eras. (Literary tradition, AO4); (AO3)
- A study of how pre-1914 poets have explored different aspects of a theme, such as love, or conflict, or childhood. (Literary tradition, AO4); (AO3)
- A comparison of the portrayal of nature in the poetry of Wordsworth with one other nineteenth century poet, or with an eighteenth century poet. (Literary tradition, AO4); (AO3)
- A study of an individual poet, such as William Blake, John Donne, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, relating their work to their lives and times. (Social/historical/cultural contexts, AO4)
- A comparison of pilgrims described in Chaucer’s *Prologue* to the *Canterbury Tales*, showing how Chaucer’s descriptions add to our understanding of his society. A description of a pilgrim can count as an individual poem. (Social/historical/cultural contexts, AO4) (AO3)

## Edexcel suggested assignments for Unit 3

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### Sources

Apart from printed sources, the easiest way of obtaining a copy of a poem is to use [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) and type into the “Search” box the title of the poem and the writer. You will find the poem itself and often useful critical commentary as well.

\*Available in the Edexcel Poetry Anthology for use with Edexcel GCE English AS and A2 courses. (Order code: UA007030)

### 1. Nature

Suggested reading – select from the following:

*To Autumn* – John Keats \*

Extracts from *The Prelude (the stealing of the boat, or skating)* – William Wordsworth

*Nutting* – Wordsworth

*The Daffodils* – Wordsworth

*High Weaving Heather* – Emily Bronte

*Stars* – Emily Bronte

*Pied Beauty* – G.M. Hopkins

*The Eagle* – Tennyson

*The Tyger* – William Blake

*To a Mouse* – Robert Burns

*In the Bleak Midwinter* – Christina Rossetti

*When Icicles Hang by the Wall (Winter’s Song from Love’s Labour’s Lost)* – Shakespeare

#### Suggested assignment:

***Nature has always inspired poets. Compare the different ways poets have responded to the natural world, using it as a source of ideas and emotions. (Literary tradition, AO3; AO4)***

The choice of poems for study might focus on the animal world, or on nature at different times of year. Students might compare the different moods conveyed, the language of description, the writers’ viewpoint, the different verse forms.

### 2. Love and Loss

Suggested reading – select from the following:

*First Love* – John Clare

*How do I Love Thee?\** - Elizabeth Barret Browning

*A Birthday* - Christina Rossetti

*Cousin Kate* - Christina Rossetti

*When We Two Parted* - Lord Byron

*Remember* \* - Christina Rossetti

*Villegiature* - Edith Nesbitt

*A Woman to Her Lover* - Christina Walsh

*My Last Duchess\** - Robert Browning

*Porphyria’s Lover* – Robert Browning

*Meeting at Night* – Robert Browning

*La Belle Dame sans Merci* - John Keats

*The Flea* – John Donne

*To Althea, from Prison\** - Richard Lovelace

*The Unquiet Grave* – Anon

*To His Coy Mistress\** - Robert Marvell

*Shall I Compare Thee*– William Shakespeare

*Let Me Not to the Marriage of True Minds (sonnet 116)\** - William Shakespeare

### **Suggested assignment:**

***Romantic love, physical love, unrequited love, obsessive love... Compare the ways poets have written about love, bringing out different aspects of the theme. (Literary tradition, AO3, AO4)***

The above list only hints at the vast collection of pre 1914 poems available on this theme. A selection might cover the range of possible aspects from the cynical and murderous to the naïve and romantic.

### **3. Time Passing**

#### **Suggested reading – select from the following:**

*To Daffodils* – Robert Herrick  
*To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time* – Robert Herrick  
*The Twa Corbies\** – Anon.  
*Like as the Waves* – Shakespeare  
*Shall I Compare Thee* – Shakespeare  
*I Remember, I Remember* – Thomas Hood  
*Ulysses\** – Tennyson  
*Ozymandias* – Shelley  
*When I Have Fears* – Keats  
*Ode on a Grecian Urn* – Keats  
*To a Mouse* – Robert Burns  
*Passing and Glassing* – Christina Rossetti  
*Virtue* – George Herbert

#### **Suggested assignment:**

***Time passing is a common theme of poetry. Compare the different thoughts and emotions expressed by various poets on this subject (Literary tradition, AO3)***

This is a more challenging theme, but intriguing for able students, who will respond to the romantic idea of the shortness of life compared with the timelessness of art.

### **4) Magic and Mystery**

#### **Suggested reading – select from the following poems:**

*The Lady of Shalott* – Tennyson  
*La Belle Dame Sans Merci* – John Keats  
*The Kraken Wakes* – Tennyson  
*Ozymandias* – Shelley  
*Kubla Khan* – Coleridge  
*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* - Coleridge  
Extracts from *Beowulf*  
*Jabberwocky* – Lewis Carroll  
*The Listeners* – Walter de la Mare  
*Flannan Isle* – Wilfrid Gibson

#### **Suggested assignment:**

***How have writers created an atmosphere of magic and mystery in the selection of poems you have studied? Compare the different techniques and verse-forms used***

Possible sub-divisions of the theme: mythical creatures; mediaeval/Arthurian setting; exotic, distant places.

## 5. Stories in Verse

### **Suggested reading – select from the following:**

*The Lady of Shalott* – Tennyson  
*Morte d'Arthur* – Tennyson  
*Porphyria's Lover* – Browning  
*John Gilpin* – William Cowper  
*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* – Coleridge  
*The Yarn of the Nancy Bell* – W.S. Gilbert  
*Flannan Isle* – Wilfrid Gibson  
*Extracts from Beowulf*  
*The Pardoner's Tale* – Chaucer  
Traditional ballads such as:  
*Edward, Edward*  
*A Faithless Shepherd Courted Me*

### **Suggested assignment:**

***There is an ancient tradition in English poetry of narrative verse. Write a comparison of a selection of narrative poems illustrating a variety of subjects, moods and verse-forms (Literary tradition, AO3)***

The poems studied could be limited to traditional ballads, but the assignment is looking for the diversity of the form. If *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is selected then the assignment could be limited to two or three poems (*Sea Mysteries?*) in recognition of the length and complexity of Coleridge's poem.

## 6. The pre 1914 poetry of W. B. Yeats

### **Suggested Reading – select from the following:**

*Down by the Sally Gardens*  
*The Lake Isle of Innisfree*  
*When You Are Old*  
*The Hosts of the Air*  
*The Song of Wandering Aengus*  
*He Remembers Forgotten Beauty*  
*The Fiddler of Dooney*  
*Never Give all the Heart*  
*O Do Not Love too Long*  
*Words*  
*No Second Troy*  
*Reconciliation*

### **Suggested assignment:**

***What have you found interesting in the poetry of W. B. Yeats which you have studied? You should concentrate on a theme such as love poems, or a sense of place***

# English Literature examination

## 2F (Foundation Tier) or 3H (Higher Tier)

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### General comments

- There is one examination only which is worth 70% of the total marks.
- There will be four sections on the examination paper:  
Section A: Modern Poetry  
Section B: Modern Prose  
Section C: Modern Drama  
Section D: Modern Literary non-fiction
- Candidates must answer **THREE** questions, each from a different section. No individual section is compulsory.
- The examination will last for 2 hours and 15 minutes. Candidates are advised to spend 45 minutes on each question, as each question carries equal weighting.
- This is an “open text” examination. Candidates should therefore have access to the following texts when taking the examination:
  - For section A, Modern Poetry in the Edexcel Anthology
  - For section B (Modern Prose), section C (Modern Drama), and section D (Modern Literary non-fiction), copies of prescribed texts.
- From the summer examination of 2005, copies of the anthology and the set texts taken into the examination must not be annotated or marked in any way.
- From 2005, the “clean” copies of the set texts for sections B, C and D taken into the examination must be from the list of approved editions given in Appendix 3 of the specification.
- In all sections of the question paper there will be a choice of questions on each text.
- At Foundation Tier, the majority of questions will take the form of a central question supported by “bullet points”; at Higher Tier, bullet points will be used sparingly.
- Full details of the assessment criteria, with specific examples of how they relate to individual question, can be found in the Specimen Papers and Mark Schemes booklet that has been produced to complement this guide. These specimen materials may prove helpful in giving insight into the style and format of questions.
- In all four sections examiners will reward positive responses from candidates who engage with the texts and substantiate their answers with relevant and detailed textual references. Such references may or may not take the form of quotations.
- Each answer is unique in its qualities and strengths. However, insofar as it is possible to characterise “typical” responses, the following progression may be helpful:

G	Responses typically offer a basic awareness
F	Responses typically offer simple comments
E	Responses typically offer straightforward comments, with reference to details

D	Responses typically offer developed comments supported by reference to appropriate detail
C	Responses typically offer focused comments supported by reference to relevant details
B	Responses typically offer focused comments supported by selective details
A	Responses typically offer focused comments supported by a sustained use of the text
A*	Responses typically offer focused comments supported by a command of the text

- Teaching approaches might vary considerably. For those teachers who choose to cover Section A, Modern Poetry, (this is of course no longer compulsory, as candidates may answer in section B, C and D), the change to “clean texts” from 2005 onwards may have a considerable impact. While it may remain common practice to advise pupils to annotate texts during classroom discussion, the candidates must be prepared to work without such notes on the day of the examination. While there may for a while be a perception amongst some candidates, and teachers, that this deprives them of “support”, for many candidates this will represent a step forward. Over-dependence on prepared materials will be eliminated. As its worst this dependence has taken the form of slavish copying out of imperfectly understood notes about features of poetic technique which were not related to the needs of the question, nor supported by meaningful comment. Candidates will be required to engage with the text, and to offer a genuine personal response. In sections B, C and D the “prepared answer” approach, which disadvantages candidates, will no longer be possible. A focus on the precise demands of the question is what will be sought rather than one pulled together from annotations which may or may not have met the needs of the question.
- Teachers will need to consider how best to prepare their students for a “clean text” examination. Edexcel will provide an additional set of anthologies for examination use only, and these should be kept “clean”. Students will of course have their own copies of the anthology which can be annotated. However some teachers plan to keep notes completely separate from the text so that students do not come to rely on annotations.
- It may be necessary to allay the fears of candidates that “clean texts” will cause a problem with the use of quotation. Examiners look for well chosen details from texts – which need not necessarily take the form of quotations. Moreover, some weaker candidates have in the past tended to fall back on the excessive use of quotation in place of developed comment. The use of “clean” texts may encourage a better focus on the needs of the question, and more direct engagement with and response to texts.
- The choice of texts is entirely a matter for centres. The texts have been chosen to permit continuity with the previous syllabus, alongside the opportunity to study a range of accessible and worthwhile material. For those centres who choose to study Modern poetry, the anthology collection prepared for the examination may also be the poetry studied in preparation for GCSE English 1203 or 1204. There will be co-ordination in the setting of question papers to ensure that a variety of poems, within a single collection, is specified at each examination session across the two subjects. This means that questions in English and English Literature will not refer to the same named poems.
- The newly introduced Literary non-fiction, Section D, may be used to replace any one of the sections in the previous syllabus: any combination of three from sections A, B, C and D may now be chosen. Questions on the Literary non-fiction texts will acknowledge the non-fiction genre, so that in teaching these texts the emphasis may need to be different from the preparation for Section B, Modern prose, for example.



## **Examination Section A – Modern Poetry**

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- Centres will be provided with a free copy of the Edexcel Anthology for each candidate.
- Candidates must take their copies of the Edexcel Anthology into the examination for Section A.
- There will be **two** questions set on each collection of thematic poetry from the Edexcel Anthology. Candidates will be required to answer **one** question based on **one** of the thematic collections in the anthology. These are: **In such a Time as This; Identity; Nature.**
- One question will name at least two poems from the chosen collection; the other question will name one poem from the chosen collection and will require comparison with at least one other poem selected by the candidate.
- Candidates will be required to write about a minimum of two poems. At least one of the poems will be named in the question; candidates will be required to compare that with at least one other poem, which may be named, or may be selected by the candidate. (AO3)
- An element of comparison will be present in all questions.
- Candidates will be asked to explore relationships and comparisons between poems, selecting and evaluating relevant material, and to explore the language, structure and form of the poems. (AO1, AO2, AO3)

**See the section beginning on page 37 for teaching ideas on individual poems within the collections, and suggestions on how to group the poems and devise practice assignments.**

- The main aim in this section is to encourage candidates to explore the poems in detail and to develop informed personal responses. Such responses do not depend on a wide repertoire of technical terms: excessive emphasis on the jargon of literary criticism can distract candidates from the exploration of the poems' meanings and effects.
- The prompts and suggestions (bullet points) which will appear on the foundation paper (and, sparingly, on the higher paper) are advisory rather than mandatory. The intention of these bullet points is to encourage candidates to approach the texts thoughtfully and to offer a possible framework for their responses. Candidates should not regard them as a formula; examiners will reward relevant responses which move beyond the areas suggested in the bullet points. In successful answers candidates will demonstrate their own response to the question, with or without use of the framework.

## Examination Section B – Modern Prose

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- There will be **two** questions set on each text. Candidates will be required to answer **one** question on **one** text. The text must be chosen from the following list:
  - *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
  - *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck
  - *Animal Farm* by George Orwell
  - *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding
  - *The Other Side of Truth* by Beverley Naidoo
  - *Twenty-one Stories* by Graham Greene. (All stories in the collection are prescribed. Questions on this text will require candidates to write about at least two stories from the collection, at least one of which will be named).
- Candidates will be asked to respond to a prose text critically, sensitively and in detail. They must select appropriate ways to convey response and use textual evidence as appropriate. (AO1)
- Candidates will of course need to demonstrate their understanding of the text which they have studied, and awareness of plot, setting, character and theme will be central to that understanding. Response will need to be supported by relevant details from the text, which may or may not take the form of quotation.
- In this section, AO2, AO3 and AO4 will be addressed as appropriate to the text and the question. As an example, a question on *Twenty-one Stories* might ask for a comparison between the roles of children in two of the stories, thereby addressing AO3.
- The qualities which make a successful answer have been touched on earlier in this Guide. In the Modern Prose section in particular, successful candidates maintain a good focus on the question throughout their response, and make full use of their knowledge of the text.
- Maintaining a focus on the question is vital. At times, candidates see the name of a character, or a reference to a particular aspect of a text, in the question, and seem unable to resist producing a prepared answer on that topic – regardless of whether or not it fits the precise demands of the question. This is a feat of memory, but it is not showing the examiner that the candidate can make a personal response to the text, supported by textual knowledge, as required by a particular question. This lack of focus in responses applies across the ability range.
- Making the best use of one’s knowledge of the text is also vital. The weakest responses, obviously, do little more than give cursory accounts of characters or episodes, re-telling the story without purposeful comments. Even the least able of candidates should be encouraged to offer their own views and comments, supporting them by referring to the text, even if only in broad terms.
- At a slightly higher level of achievement, a narrative response is common. This is not necessarily an unsuitable approach, and indeed for less able candidates a commentary or narrative may be the best way for them to respond to a particular question and to display their knowledge. However, the narrative-with-commentary approach does not suit all questions; it needs skilful handling if the narrative element is not to outweigh the comments. In the E, D and C grades this balance, or lack of it, is often what distinguishes successful responses from those which could, perhaps, have offered more. Candidates, if they are to use a narrative approach, should be encouraged to ensure that all such narrative is relevant to the question, purposeful, and used to illustrate a response, rather than offered for its own sake.
- In the C/B grades, candidates should be using texts more selectively. Focused responses will offer an argument, or a hypothesis, as demanded by the question, and will show the ability to select from the text precise examples in support of the views being expressed. References to the text need not be lengthy and should not be too broad: an apt detail

serves the purpose more effectively. In other words, a depth rather than a breadth of textual awareness is sought.

- For the highest grades, examiners will expect to see analytical skills, thoughtful responses which do the question full justice. Candidates should be encouraged to engage with the question, and the text, in a lively way. At this level, the mark scheme refers to “*a command of the text*”: candidates are often at their most successful when illustrative details are integrated into their own comments, in a sophisticated way.

## Examination Section C: Modern Drama

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- There will be **two** questions set on each text. Candidates will be required to answer **one** question on **one** text. The text must be chosen from the following list:
  - *Educating Rita* by Willie Russell
  - *Journey's End* by R C Sheriff
  - *An Inspector Calls* by J B Priestley
  - *A View from the Bridge* by Arthur Miller
  - *The Long and the Short and the Tall* by Willis Hall
  - *Talking Heads (Volume One)* by Alan Bennett. (All the monologues in this collection are prescribed. Questions on this text will require candidates to write about at least two monologues from the collection, at least one of which will be named.)
- Candidates will be asked to respond to a play critically, sensitively and in detail. They must select appropriate ways to convey response and use textual evidence as appropriate. (AO1)
- Candidates will of course need to demonstrate their understanding of the text which they have studied. An awareness of plot, character, theme and an appreciation of the text as drama will be central to that understanding. Responses will need to be supported by relevant details from the text, which may or may not take the form of quotation. This question will address the relationship between the meaning of the text and its language, structure and form.
- Questions on the modern drama texts will address the distinctive characteristics of the genre. Candidates can therefore expect questions on such aspects as dialogue, dramatic devices such as contrast and irony, and character interaction.
- In this section AO2, AO3 and AO4 will be addressed as appropriate to the text and the question. As an example, a question on *Talking Heads* might ask for a comparison of the writer's methods of characterisation in two different monologues, thereby addressing AO3.
- Reference should be made to the comments on a) "focus on the question", and on b) "making the best use of the text", in the previous section of this guide - Modern Prose. The comments here also apply to the Modern Drama section of the exam.

## Examination Section D: Modern Literary Non-fiction

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- There will be **two** questions set on each text. Candidates will be required to answer **one** question on **one** text. The text must be chosen from the following list:
  - *The Diary of Anne Frank*
  - *A Moment of War* by Laurie Lee
  - *Down and Out in Paris and London* by George Orwell
  - *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt
  - *Chinese Cinderella* by Adeline Yen Mah
  - *Bad Blood* by Lorna Sage
- Candidate will be asked to respond to a literary non-fiction text critically, sensitively and in detail. They must select appropriate ways to convey response and use textual evidence as appropriate. (AO1)
- Candidates will of course need to demonstrate their understanding of the text which they have studied. An awareness of how people and relationships are portrayed, how a sense of a real place and time emerge from the texts, and of the distinctive qualities of the type of writing will be central to that understanding. Literary non-fiction should be acknowledged as a genre with its own conventions and characteristics. Responses will need to be supported by relevant details from the text, which may or may not take the form of quotation.
- In this Section, AO2, AO3 and AO4 will be addressed as appropriate to the text and the question. For example, a question on how a writer recreates a sense of a particular time or place might address AO4.
- Reference should be made to the comments on a) “focus on the question” and b) “making the best use of the text”, in the section of this guide on modern prose. The comments offered there apply also to the modern literary non-fiction section of the exam.

# Examples of candidate responses to English Literature

(English Literature Unit 1: Pre 1914 Drama. See page 101 for candidate responses)

## English Literature Unit 2: Pre 1914 Prose

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### Essay A

*This work is based on **Half a Life Time** by Elizabeth Gaskell, contrasting the characters of Michael Hurst and Susan Dixon.*

The story is set in rural Yorkshire, in 1851. It is set about 150 years ago. In those days women were not allowed to own a house or money or a farm. The story is between 35 -40 years of Susan Dixon's life. She meets a man called Michael Hurst that she falls in love with.

The first mention of Michael was when he started to work on the farm as a servant at Yew Nook. We learn that Michael is a horrible person.

Michael obviously doesn't like Willie. This is an example of what Susan's Mum said before she died,  
"He vexes Michael at times and Michael has struck him before now".

Michael physically abuses Willie;  
"With one or two good round kicks he sent the lad whimpering away into the back kitchen".

Michael tells Susan that Willie should be committed;  
"The doctor thinks he will get badder from year to year and he said if he was us- he would send him off in time to Lancaster Asylum."

This quote shows that he is a horrible person and he doesn't care about Willie.

Michael tells Susan to choose him or Willie on page 35.  
"Choose between him and me Susy for I swear to thee thou should not have both."

The care that Michael has for Susan is selfish care.

When Michael dies everyone finds out about his farmhouse.  
"It was a small farmhouse carelessly kept out side, slatternly tended within."

This makes us think that Michael didn't look after his family.

"Hold thy nose willa?" said Michael roughly. This tells us that Michael was horrible to the boy.

"Michael had long felt the boy to be trouble but of late he had absolutely loathed him". I think that Michael didn't care about Susan but he just wanted the farm house and the money.

Susan cared for her brother that was disabled that she promised before her mother passed away that she would look after Willie. Susan also cared for Michael's family after he died. I think that was nice of Susan to do that for Michael after he put her through all that.

The difference between Michael and Susan's character is that Susan is nice and Michael is not.

### **Commentary**

The candidate offers a simple sequence of points about the character. By and large, these relate to the title of the assignment, and constitute a limited answer to a specific question. AO1 has been addressed throughout, and the focus on dialogue introduces elements of AO2; there is even some acknowledgement of AO4 in the opening remarks. While this response is limited in its achievement, it shows some understanding of the key features of themes, characters and language. It conveys the response in an appropriate way, and it refers to aspects of the texts to support a personal response. It is therefore graded at F.

## **English Literature Coursework Unit 2: Pre 1914 Prose**

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### **Essay B**

What part does Fanny Robin play in the novel, *Far from the Madding Crowd*?

It seems that Fanny Robin plays only a minor role in the novel. It would be true to say this as Fanny does only appear in five of the fifty seven chapters in the novel and in four of those her identity is not known. However, though, I believe Fanny is an important factor of the plot. In later chapters her corpse is the cause of how the book ends.

The first time that we meet Fanny is in chapter seven. Fanny meets Oak as she is leaving Weatherbury. Oak does not know who Fanny is but realises she is insecure and uneasy. She introduces mystery concerning her future and Troy's character. The book quotes, "He fancied that he had felt himself in the penumbra of a very deep sadness when touching that slight and fragile creature." This tells us Oak's feeling of sadness shadowed upon him as he touches Fanny when giving her money. Oak is aware of the girl's situation. Fanny is obviously timid and insecure. Her voice was suggestive of romance, the book reads, "The voice was unexpectedly attractive, it was the low and dulcet ...suggestive of romance." Further on in the novel in chapter eleven we learn for ourselves that Fanny is under stress making the practical arrangements for her and Troy's wedding. Great fear must be prompting her resource and effort. Fanny speaks to Troy through a window in the barracks, and he agrees to marry her. We can see that the roles have been reversed. Oak receives a cheerful and optimistic letter from Fanny in chapter fifteen. She returns his money and announces she is to be married to Troy. Troy's character is introduced to us through the letter, she writes of him as being 'a man of great respectability and high honour,' but I believe she is blind to his faults. Boldwood believes he has deceived her. It may be that she is over-impressed by his noble blood and military rank, which she states very proudly. In the next chapter, Fanny makes her fatal mistake over the churches. Troy waits at one church and Fanny at another by mistake. Troy leaves Fanny when they later meet due to him feeling too humiliated and angry. Here we can see Troy's vanity and selfishness, it was chance that the couple should mistake the churches.

Later on in the novel in chapter nine we meet Fanny again. Bathsheba and Troy the now married couple are returning from Casterbridge market and they pass Fanny. Troy sends Bathsheba on ahead, she doesn't know that it is Fanny. Troy arranges to meet Fanny in Casterbridge two days later. As Troy leaves he says, "Good-bye till then. I am a brute – good-bye!" Troy refuses to tell Bathsheba who the girl was. Fanny struggles on towards Casterbridge union-house in the hours of darkness. She finds a dog that mysteriously appears beside her and uses it to help her and, in chapter forty one we can see Bathsheba and Troy are arguing over Troy's request for money, which we know he wants for Fanny. Bathsheba notices a golden lock of another woman's hair which Troy had been keeping, we know that it is Fanny's. Later in the chapter news was bought of Fanny's death. Bathsheba sends Poorgrass to bring the body to Weatherbury. Bathsheba by enquiry discovers that Fanny has done much travelling, that her lover was in Troy's regiment, and that she had golden hair. In this chapter Bathsheba is well on the way to discovering who Fanny's lover was, but it isn't yet realised how significant Fanny's death is. When alive Fanny's role was passive now after her death she dominates the thoughts of all. First Oak and Boldwood who wish not to tell Bathsheba of Troy's perfidy, then of the local people, then Bathsheba and finally of Troy.

In chapter forty two the corpse is bought home to Weatherbury. Oak erases the words, 'and child' from besides Fanny's name on the coffin. He can see that Bathsheba is going to find out that Troy was Fanny's lover and that she died giving birth to his child, but still tried to delay the discovery. The coffin is opened by Bathsheba in chapter forty three and Troy returns. Troy shows his remorse, and affection for Fanny. Bathsheba rushes out into the dark in despair. The scene by the coffin is highly dramatic, emotion is raw and basic, a sense of anger, jealousy, remorse are present, words and actions are angry and violent. The presence of Fanny's corpse serves to heighten the emotions of the married couple and the truth of their feeling to each other " I love you better than she did", "you are nothing to me, nothing." Finally in chapter forty five Troy decorates Fanny's grave.

Fanny's role in the novel is vital for the plot and the aspect of the novel's symbolism which deals with chance and fate. Also Fanny shows us the contrast to Bathsheba in many areas. To conclude the question what part does Fanny play in the novel, I would say she doesn't have a major role but it is her effect on others that is significant. Fanny also certainly has bearing on the themes of the book.

### **Commentary**

This essay is quite thoughtfully developed, and maintains throughout a good focus on the question. Knowledge of the text is displayed in some detail, and there is some insight shown into the character of Fanny and her role in the novel. The response meets AO1 and is conveyed appropriately. Although there are no specific guidelines as to the length of units, this essay seems appropriate in that respect also. There is some awareness displayed of the structure of the text (AO2) as the question demands. The understanding of how meaning has been conveyed, in commenting on Fanny's role, points towards a C grade.

The use of well chosen details to support the views expressed, and the insight into characters and plot, confirm this. The work, however, does not offer the closer examination of the text, nor the sophistication of comment, to reach the B grade.



### Essay C

#### A Comparison of *Turned* and *The Withered Arm*.

*The Withered Arm* by Thomas Hardy and *Turned* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman are both short stories. They are both themed around the revenge of people who have been involved in affairs between a married man and a young lady. In *Turned* a husband has an affair with his servant girl, Gerta. Upon finding out, his wife decides that it is solely the fault of her husband. She leaves him while he is on business and goes to live with Gerta. *The Withered Arm* is about an old flame of a rich farmer. She curses his new wife and the story goes on to tell of her struggle to rid herself of the curse, a withered arm. The two short stories have many similarities but also many differences.

The first difference is the setting and period in which they were written. *The Withered Arm*, written by Thomas Hardy in 1888, is set in rural Wessex in the late 1800's, whereas *Turned* is written by an American woman, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and set in a big city in the USA in the early 1900's. The differences between life in the countryside and the city play a part in the stories and also cause other differences.

The types of character in the stories are similar. In both *The Withered Arm* and *Turned* the main characters are husband and wife and another woman with whom the husband has an illicit relationship.

The main events *The Withered Arm* and *Turned* revolve around the same themes, affairs and revenge. *The Withered Arm* uses an affair between a rich farmer and a working class milkmaid as a platform to start a story about supernatural events and afflictions. *Turned* on the other hand concentrates more on the actual affair and how the people involved cope. The fact that the rural life is more associated with witchcraft and superstition is reflected in the events of *The Withered Arm*. Accordingly, *Turned* being set in the city takes a more modern approach in which the women liberate themselves from their husband or lover.

The women in the stories have many similarities. Both of the wives, Gertrude Lodge and Marion Marroner, are from an upper class background and are well educated. We find this out through the descriptions of them. In *Turned* it says:

“...her reserved, superior, Boston-bred life...”  
“...her tastes finer, her ideals loftier...” and  
“...the woman who held Ph.D., who had been on the faculty of a college...”

In *The Withered Arm* Gertrude is described in speech as being:

“...a lady complete”,  
...and her ways be quite a woman's.”,  
“...with the shyness natural to a modest woman.”

Although there is no reference to her education we can assume that she is educated because the upper classes were usually taught.

They are also both friendly at some point with the women that their husbands have had affairs with.

The women who had the affairs, Rhoda Brook and Gerta, also have some things in common but aren't as similar as the two wives. They are both working class but where Gerta seems to enjoy her work and is enthusiastic, Rhoda Brook finds it more of a chore. Gerta's attitude to work is well described in *Turned* when it says,

"She was what is called 'willing', was unusually teachable and plastic..."  
"I never saw anyone so docile,' Mrs Marroner had often commented, 'it is perfection in a servant, but almost a defect in character.'"

Rhoda Brook has a harder life than Gerta as she also has to look after her son, an unwanted product of her relationship with Farmer Lodge. Gerta has a very carefree attitude to life and is very ignorant and naïve of the dangers in the world. Rhoda Brook on the other hand has had a hard life and knows all about hardship and this makes her very guarded and cautious. It is quite likely that Rhoda Brook was a lot like Gerta when she was younger but changed after Farmer Lodge took advantage of her. This was hinted at when Hardy writes,

"The radiance lit her pale cheek, and made her dark eyes, that had once been handsome, seem handsome anew."

Both women are uneducated and forced to work for their living.

The men in the stories also have their similarities and their differences. They are both rich, educated, middle to upper class men, roughly the same age and both businessmen. Farmer Lodge makes his money from hiring out his land and animal stocks and Mr Marroner is always going away on business trips. They are both married although Mr Marroner has been married a lot longer to someone his own age and Farmer Lodge has only recently married someone a lot younger than himself. Farmer Lodge and the age difference between him and his wife are well describe when it says,

"The driver was a yeoman in the prime of his life, cleanly shaven like an actor, his face being toned to that bluish-vermilion hue which so often graces a thriving farmer's features when returning home after successful dealings in the town. Besides him sat a woman, many years his junior – almost, indeed, a girl."

The marriage between Farmer Lodge and Gertrude Lodge seems to be of a more formal, arranged type, where a father marries his daughter to someone he thinks is suitably rich and upper class. The Marroners' marriage on the other hand was a more modern, romantic type of marriage. These two different approaches to marriage are also indicative of their surroundings as the rural areas are often connected strongly with tradition and the arranged marriages are quite traditional. Modern cities had a more liberal approach to marriage.

The men's roles within the community are also different. Farmer Lodge's type of rich landowner is a minority group in the countryside where most people are working class. This makes him more important and allows him to play a bigger role within the community. Mr Marroner is one of a large number of businessmen

who live in the city and so is less important and plays a smaller role in the community although his success has made him quite well known and well respected.

The endings of the stories are very different. The end of *The Withered Arm* is a tragic ending. Gertrude Lodge touches her arm to the neck of her freshly hung corpse in an effort to cure her affliction. The body turns out to be the son of Rhoda Brook and farmer Lodge and Gertrude dies of shock.

All of the characters suffer because Rhoda Brook loses a son and a friend, Gertrude loses her life and Farmer Lodge loses his wife and his son. Rhoda Brook's son is punished when he is hanged but Farmer Lodge is also punished for his mistreatment of Rhoda Brook when he loses his wife through a chain of events caused unintentionally by Rhoda Brook because of the ill feeling between them.

The ending of *Turned* is nowhere near as tragic. Mr Marroner returns home to find that the house is deserted. After a long time and a lot of deliberation he employs a private investigator to look for his wife and Gerta. He soon finds them and Mr Marroner pays a visit. The pair, Gerta and Mrs Marroner, confront him with the baby and demand to know what he has to say for himself. The pair had moved away to punish him and to make him think about what he had done. When he did find them he was made to come crawling back and so is the loser in the story.

Mrs Marroner and Gerta are winners because of their liberating victory over Mr Marroner but they are also both losers because they have a baby that isn't really wanted and Mrs Marroner has lost her marriage.

A major difference between the two stories is the presence or lack of supernatural involvement. *The Withered Arm* is full of witchcraft and conjuring but *Turned* has no supernatural involvement at all. This is again indicative of the stories' urban/rural settings. People in the country have a strong belief in the power of herbal remedies and charms (elements of the supernatural) whereas these things have no place in the city.

The narrative structure of the stories is also very different. *The Withered Arm* is a straightforward story, being told in its correct chronological order. *Turned* on the other hand is told largely in flashback starting with both women upset and then going back to show what events caused these consequences. This could also show how life is simpler in the country.

There are many different relationships in *The Withered Arm* and *Turned* but the power share is slightly different with each one. The relationship between Farmer Lodge and Rhoda Brook has the power firmly with Farmer Lodge. He enjoyed the relationship until it no longer suited him and then he chose to end it. He then continued to have power over Rhoda Brook because he owned the land from which she made her living. He also didn't pay any money towards the upbringing of their child. This shows that Rhoda Brook didn't have the power to get the money that she needed off Farmer Lodge. The relationship between Farmer Lodge and Gertrude Lodge was also controlled by Farmer Lodge. Although their marriage was more equal than his relationship with Rhoda Brook, he had the power because he was the man and therefore superior as the sexist attitudes of the period dictated. The man's typical role at that time was to work and provide for the family whereas the woman's role was "to keep the man happy and look pretty on his arm." This was especially true in rural areas, which were old

fashioned and traditional unlike the towns which were more modern and liberal. Farmer Lodge's power over Gertrude is shown when he says,

"Damned if you won't poison yourself with these apothecary messes and witches mixtures at some time or other",

in reference to the remedies she was trying in an effort to cure her ailment. She responds by saying

"I'll clear the whole lot out and destroy them,"  
..."and try such remedies no more!"

In *Turned* Mr Marroner had a much more equal relationship with his wife but the power all shifted to her side when she left him. She could do this because she lived in the city where the sexist attitudes were less heeded and because the period was later and so more liberal. The equality in the Marroner's relationship may also have been down to them as individuals. Mr Marroner's relationship with Gerta on the other hand was a lot more like Farmer Lodge's relationship with Rhoda Brook. Gerta depended on Mr Marroner for her employment and so he had a lot of power over her. He abused his power in the same way that Farmer Lodge abused his power over Rhoda.

When I read *The Withered Arm* and *Turned* I started supporting the women in the stories. Charlotte Perkins Gilman encourages this by making the man deceitful and by showing, right at the start, how his actions affected the women so badly. Thomas Hardy is less biased towards the women although I still tended to support them. In his story I still felt sympathy for the women because of their situation but not to the same extent. There is less ganging up against the men. In *The Withered Arm* there is less of the female against male aspect that there is in *Turned* and I think this is because the women dislike each other as well.

I preferred *The Withered Arm* to *Turned* because it was a more interesting story with an unexpected twist at the end. I also found the plot of *Turned* slightly unrealistic because I feel that no one would really go and live with the woman her husband had an affair with, even if it wasn't entirely her fault. I also preferred Hardy's style of writing because his skill with description allowed me to construct a clear mental image which made the story more enjoyable. The plot was also exciting because of the cliff hangers at the end of each chapter.

### **Commentary**

This unit is based on "The Withered Arm" and "Turned." This essay is confident in its interpretation and use of the texts; knowledge and understanding are displayed throughout. Although the assignment is broad, the candidate brings a discipline to it, and gives the essay a focus in terms of settings, characters, relationship and themes. Also, valuably, it explores the two writers' attitudes towards their subjects. Matters of literary technique are touched on (comments are offered on the structure of each story, for example); and the social and cultural contexts are also discussed, in a purposeful and relevant way. The response is conveyed coherently, and the candidate's personal engagement with the texts is clear. The points made, while not necessarily profound or sophisticated, are valid, and are supported by textual reference: many of them meet the requirement to "analyse" mentioned in the criteria (Specification, page 21) for an A grade. Overall, this piece of work matches most of the descriptors for a modest A/top B grade.

## Textbooks and websites

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Hodder and Stoughton publishes two textbooks to support the teaching of the Edexcel specifications:

**GCSE English for Edexcel Student's Book** (ISBN 0 340 85745 5, available November 2002)

**GCSE English for Edexcel Teacher's Resource** (ISBN 0 340 85746 3, available November 2002)

Hodder and Stoughton also publishes **Literature Study Books**, each one covering a GCSE set text such as *Lord of the Flies*, *Of Mice and Men* and *Animal Farm*.

**Media in GCSE English**, by Chris Purple and John O'Connor (OUP ISBN 0 19 831454 X), provides teaching ideas and materials for the teaching of the Media, whether as an unprepared examination task (1203) or as a coursework unit (1204).

The Caryl Press publishes **Essential Articles**, photocopiable resource files of media and non-fiction texts covering many issues and topics.

The English and Media Centre publishes packs to support the teaching of media and literary texts, such as **The Advertising Pack**, **The News Pack** and **Making Junk**.

Websites

[www.learn.co.uk](http://www.learn.co.uk)

[www.teachit.co.uk](http://www.teachit.co.uk)

[www.tes.co.uk](http://www.tes.co.uk)

The above websites provide a wealth of teaching ideas on all areas of the English curriculum, some of it professionally produced, some through teacher forums, and much of it free.

# Resources and contacts

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- **INSET**

Full details will be published in the INSET guide sent to centres for the start of the Autumn term.

GCSE English INSET for 2002/2003 will include “Teaching the Anthology”; “Raising Achievement in Writing”; “Putting Shakespeare into Context” (at the Globe Theatre) and Assessment Support meetings.

We also offer customised INSET in individual centres. This is tailored to a centre’s specific needs, and can be a full day, a half-day or a twilight session. For further information please contact our Professional Development and Training Section, telephone 020 7758 5620 or visit our website.

- **Publications**

Available from our Publications Department: telephone 01623 467467; fax 01623 450481; email [publications@linneydirect.com](mailto:publications@linneydirect.com)

### **Specifications, Specimen Papers and support**

GCSE English A Specification (1203) Order Code: UG011438

GCSE English B Specification (1204) Order Code: UG011437

GCSE English Literature Specification (1213) Order Code: UG011436

Entry Level Certificate in English (8912) Order Code: WO10891

Entry Level Certificate in English Teachers’ Guide Order Code: W011346

The Edexcel Anthology: Order Code: UG011649

GCSE English (1203, 1204 and 5203) and English Literature (1213) Specification Guide Order Code:UG011650

GCSE English 1203,1204 Specimen Examination papers Order Code: UG11894

GCSE English Literature Specimen Examination papers Order Code: UG11893

Ring binder: Order: Code: UG011880

- **Student Guides**

Available from our website for GCSE English 1203, English 1204, English Literature 1213

- **Website**

[www.edexcel.org.uk](http://www.edexcel.org.uk) – with a dedicated English page.

- **Contacts**

Qualifications Leader: [duncan.beal@edexcel.org.uk](mailto:duncan.beal@edexcel.org.uk)

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