

# Candidate Style Answers

OCR GCSE English Language

Unit A651 Extended Literary Text: Controlled Assessment Task

This Support Material booklet is designed to accompany the OCR GCSE English Language specification for teaching from September 2010.

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## **A651 Extended Literary Text**

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# Introduction

OCR has produced these candidate style answers to support teachers in interpreting the assessment criteria for the new GCSE specifications and to bridge the gap between new specification release and availability of exemplar candidate work.

This content has been produced by subject experts, with the input of Chairs of Examiners, to illustrate how the sample assessment questions might be answered and provide some commentary on what factors contribute to an overall grading. The candidate style answers are not written in a way that is intended to replicate student work but to demonstrate what a “good” or “excellent” response might include, supported by examiner commentary and conclusions.

**As these responses have not been through full moderation and do not replicate student work, they have not been graded and are instead, banded “middle” or “high” to give an indication of the level of each response.**

Please note that this resource is provided for advice and guidance only and does not in any way constitute an indication of grade boundaries or endorsed answers.

# Unit A651 Extended Literary Texts — English Language

## Controlled Assessment Task

### Question

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Explore how the writer shows conflict between order and disorder in “Pride and Prejudice”.

### Candidate A

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I thought that Wickham created chaos, never mind disorder, wherever he went in the story. By the time it ends he and Lydia have been sent to Newcastle, Elizabeth and Darcy are engaged and some sort of order is restored.

Elizabeth and her sisters first meet Wickham in Meryton where he has come to join his regiment. He's in Army Uniform looking very attractive and is described as “the best part of beauty, a fine countenance, a good figure and very pleasing address”.

No wonder he makes them all so excited! In the next chapter they meet Wickham at their Aunt's house and he and Elizabeth have a long talk while the others are playing cards. He looks attractive, but that is only by comparison with stupid Mr. Collins and their Uncle. Wickham basically gives a very nasty account of Darcy to Elizabeth, which she agrees with. He encourages her to think badly of him, for example, “He is not at all liked in Hertfordshire. Everybody is disgusted with his pride.” And Wickham replies, “I cannot pretend to be sorry”.

He's actually pretending to be a gentleman, which we later discover he isn't. He uses the excuse of loyalty to D'Arcy's father to try and get Elizabeth to do his dirty work of revenge on D'Arcy for him. She is so besotted with him at this stage that it looks as if she might eventually succeed. “This is quite shocking! He deserves to be publicly disgraced!”

It's not surprising after this that Elizabeth rejects his advances when they are in Kent. Elizabeth is staying with Mr. & Mrs. Collins at Hunsford vicarage and Darcy and Colonel Fitzwilliam are staying at Rosings, the home of his Aunt, Lady Catherine de Bourgh.

It comes as a shock to no one except Elizabeth herself when Darcy makes his proposal to her. “You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you”. In response she “lost all compassion in anger.” Not surprising, after all Wickham had said to her about Darcy. He complains about her “lack of civility” which only makes her angrier. This reaches a climax on page 224: “..... your arrogance, your conceit, and your selfish disdain for the feelings of others... you were the last man in the world.. I could ever be prevailed on to marry.”

When you read this you think that she's never going to get him back. However, Elizabeth reacts very differently when she reads the long letter that Darcy sends her after this encounter, telling his side of the Wickham story.. She begins to see that she may have been wrong about the two men, after all.

“It was impossible not to feel that there was gross duplicity on one side or the other”. This is the turning point and Elizabeth feels more for Darcy than for Wickham from this moment. Eventually she feels completely humiliated by her previous thoughts and actions. “vanity, not love has been my folly” she says. “Till this moment I never knew myself”.

But Wickham still has a lot of disorder left to inflict on the Bennet family. Elizabeth is taken to Derbyshire but the Gardiners (her Aunt and Uncle from London) and when they go to Darcy’s stately home she and Darcy meet again. I loved the scene in the film when Darcy falls off his horse and ends up in a pond. You get the impression that their relationship will get back on track from this point, but just as this is happening Elizabeth gets two letters from Jane to tell her that Lydia (their younger sister) has run off with Wickham. At this point in the story chaos breaks out. First of all, no one knows where they are. In Scotland?(presumably to get married at Gretna Green). Or Brighton? (where his regiment is). Are they still in London and are they in Clapham or on the road back to Meryton? I thought that it all got like detective story at this point. Lydia’s reputation appears to be ruined, as is the reputation of the whole family; Elizabeth now thinks Darcy will drop her and Mrs. Bennet is so ill she can’t come downstairs.

It is sensible Mr. Gardiner who sorts it all out, at first. He goes straight on to London when they get back from Derbyshire and writes and tells the Bennets what he has done. The most important bit is when he says

“Mr. Wickham’s circumstances are not so hopeless as they are generally believed to be....” Perhaps some of the disorder is because the Bennets have overreacted because they are too concerned about what other people would think of them.

And so order is restored. The more Elizabeth thinks of Darcy, the more she falls in love with him and makes a good comparison between them as a couple on the one hand and Wickham and Lydia on the other. She believes that each couple deserve each other: and that, as opposed to Darcy and her, the other two “were only brought together because their passions were stronger than their virtue”. Elizabeth’s final judgement of Wickham is totally damning.

“He has been profligate in every sense of the word... he has neither integrity or honour... he is as false and deceitful as he is insinuating”.

Finally, Elizabeth discovers that Darcy has paid off all Wickham’s debts in an act of great generosity. The way is now clear for their engagement and marriage.

## Commentary

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*This gives a personal and critical response throughout. There is plenty of comparison from different points within the text and quotation to support and justify what is said. There is some understanding of the purpose of the novel and plenty of reference to language, grammar and structure to show how meaning is conveyed: the quotations are aptly chosen and sensibly discussed. (A sound middle response).*

## Candidate B

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Wickham and, to a lesser extent, Caroline Bingley are the enemies of order in the novel. All he does is to pursue a career of selfishness and deceit and she is little better, allowing her jealousy of the two elder Bennet sisters to cloud her judgement. Everyone else's character is put to the test by their disregard for anyone other than themselves.

In Chapter 43 of the novel Jane Austen describes Elizabeth's visit to Pemberley, Darcy's stately home in Derbyshire. She is nervous and apprehensive about the visit, which is not surprising, given her mixed (but increasingly single minded) emotions about him.

When they arrive she observes that it was a "large, handsome stone building..... and in front, a stream of some natural importance was swelled into greater, but without any artificial appearance." These are very important words. They stand as a metaphor for Darcy himself who, we see, is a very different creature at home from the one who has provoked Elizabeth's disapproval and anger earlier in the novel, when he was at Netherfield and (at first) in Kent. Later in that episode, of course she takes a more balanced judgement "vanity, not love has been my folly" she says. "Till this moment I never knew myself" and the relationship appears to be on the road to a more successful outcome as Wickham's true, ghastly character emerges and Elizabeth makes clearer and more intelligent judgements.

Jane Austen therefore poses a very important question here. Will Elizabeth be able to make sounder judgements about what she sees than she was when she first met Darcy and Wickham and was swept off her feet by the latter? The author leaves the reader in suspense, given Elizabeth's revised judgements of the two men on the one hand but her presence on Darcy's home ground on the other. Will she be able to cross that stream metaphorically as well as literally and integrate successfully into the "handsome largeness" that lacks artificiality? Will she enhance Pemberley's order or disrupt it?

Her first judgements look promising: she observes that the rooms and furniture were "neither gaudy nor uselessly fine; with less of splendor, and more real elegance, than the furniture of Rosings." Next she has a conversation with the housekeeper, Mrs. Reynolds, a confident woman, who obviously knows her place in the order of things. This lady's judgements are very clear: Darcy and his sister are good and Wickham is bad. Amid rising emotions Elizabeth is taken to the gallery to see the family portraits. When she sets eyes on the portrait of Darcy she is struck by the representation of his smile, which she ponders later. "She thought of his regard with a deeper sentiment of gratitude than it had ever raised before she remembered its warmth..." Like the lack of pretentiousness in the grounds, the picture takes her closer to Darcy's nature than her previous perceptions of his "impropriety of expression" allowed. So Art here is not for the sake of ostentation. On the contrary it is something that reinforces and supports what Pemberley and its master are. Nature and nurture are as one: they embody order.

When they walk out in to the grounds: "across the lawn towards the river" Darcy appears. "Their eyes instantly met and the cheeks of each were overspread with the deepest blush". I think that Jane Austen presents this as a sign of the emotions each has for the other, which in their different ways, have caused them so much grief. Darcy "shortly recovers himself" and, crucially, in terms of "perfect civility". To be perfectly civilised is the key element of Jane Austen's view of character and is a mainspring of order: despite his strong feelings here Darcy is educated, self -controlled and presents himself in an orderly way: reason and emotion are balanced, albeit with difficulty. Significantly, Elizabeth repeats the word as she blushes again and muses on her reactions of "shame and vexation". Jane Austen is still teasing us with the possible outcomes of Elizabeth's feelings and judgements here.

As Elizabeth and her relations continue their walk around the grounds of Pemberley they first move away from the river but then, critically, Elizabeth crosses the "simple bridge" which is (yet again) "in character with the general air of the scene" in a "spot less adorned than any they had yet visited". Our hopes rise, now for her and Darcy's future happiness. When he reappears she observes straight away that he had lost none of his previous civility: he asks to be introduced to the

Gardiners and Elizabeth is tempted to take a moral stance reflecting that these were the “very people against whom his pride had revolted”. The chapter closes with three more mentions of civility. No wonder Darcy was so upset when Elizabeth made this the principal word of insult at Hunsford.

Here, then, we have a good example of Jane Austen’s concerns with order and disorder. Order is not necessarily rigid and unchanging: ultimately Jane and Elizabeth’s entrance into a higher social class is seen as beneficial not only to them but to the aristocracy itself. Order comes first, Jane Austen insists, from within, as we see in this passage. It emanates from a harmonious balance of reason and emotion and depends, above all, on people’s ability to make sound judgements. All this depends on people having had sufficient education to become morally engaged with each other. No wonder Jane Austen’s working title for the book was “First Impressions”.

The greatest enemies of order are not those like silly Lydia and Kitty who live only for pleasure- because their education has been neglected by Mr. & Mrs. Bennet but, conversely, those like Wickham and Caroline who have chosen to consciously turn their backs on an education and upbringing that have been properly attended to. The massive degree of self reproach and hand wringing guilt Elizabeth feels only three chapters later are, arguably an overreaction, as the whole business of Wickham’s elopement with Lydia is sorted out very quickly by Mr. Gardiner, an honourable man of the world. Perhaps this is Jane Austen showing us yet again that despite Elizabeth’s apparent self-confidence she needs to learn as much from Darcy as he felt he needed to learn from her post Hunsford. It might be equally interpreted as the rival claim of each gender on the other, or, indeed both of these. But however you read it, D’Arcy and Elizabeth look set for a long, happy and orderly marriage by the end of the novel: quite the reverse of Wickham and Lydia.

## Commentary

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*There is a very strong sense of the social, cultural and historical background throughout and an outstanding (and very well informed) personal and persuasive response here. The quotations and other references to the text are aptly chosen and illuminate meaning very effectively. Jane Austen’s perspective is given admirably rigorous treatment, as are alternative reader responses. Details of language, grammar and structure and the ways they engage and affect the reader are given pellucid analysis. (A good higher response).*