



# Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE  
In English Literature (4ET1)  
Paper 02R: Modern Drama and Literary  
Heritage Texts

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## Paper Overview

This International GCSE 4ET1 02 English Literature examination consists of two sections (Modern Drama and Literary Heritage) and lasts for 1 hour and 30 minutes. This is an open book examination.

The questions on this paper have been designed to enable candidates to show what they can achieve in relation to the detailed study of texts.

### **Section A - Modern Drama.**

Candidates answer one of the two questions based on the text that they have studied. The text choices are:

*A View from the Bridge* - Arthur Miller

*An Inspector Calls* - J B Priestley

*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*, Mark Haddon (adapted by Simon Stephens)

*Kindertransport* - Diane Samuels

*Death and the King's Horseman* - Wole Soyinka

The questions require candidates to draw on their knowledge of the play, providing supporting examples, and consider the writer's use of language, form and structure.

The Assessment Objectives assessed in Section A are:

AO1	Demonstrate a close knowledge and understanding of texts, maintaining a critical style and presenting an informed personal engagement.
AO2	Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects.

### **Section B - Literary Heritage**

Candidates are required to answer one of the two questions based on the text they have studied. The text choices for Section B are:

*Romeo and Juliet* - William Shakespeare

*Macbeth* - William Shakespeare

*The Merchant of Venice* - William Shakespeare

*Pride and Prejudice* - Jane Austen

*Great Expectations* - Charles Dickens

*The Scarlet Letter* - Nathaniel Hawthorne

The questions in Section B, like in Section A, require candidates to draw on their knowledge of their chosen text, providing supporting examples, and consider the writer's use of language, form and structure.

In addition, candidates are asked to refer to context in this section.

The Assessment Objectives assessed in Section B are:

AO1	Demonstrate a close knowledge and understanding of texts, maintaining a critical style and presenting an informed personal engagement.
AO2	Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects.
AO4	Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.

Candidates are advised to spend 45 minutes on each section.

The total number of marks available for this paper is 60. Both sections carry 30 marks per question.

## General Observations

This series was the second summer series since the launch of the new specification for International GCSE.

It was pleasing to see again the full range of achievement on this single tier paper covering the 9-1 grades.

On Section A, the best answers used full and deep knowledge of their chosen text to form relevant arguments fully focused on the question. In these answers, a broad balance between AO1 and AO2 demands was achieved with candidates exploring well-selected techniques and their impact. Less successful responses tended to perform better on AO1, often giving just a light touch to AO2, or not considering AO2 at all.

Candidates at all levels of achievement performed best when they identified with the texts as drama rather than merely texts. This awareness and insight led to some effective and apposite comment on detail such as foreshadowing and dramatic irony. Less successful answers tended to lack a valid structure, which led some to drift away from the focus of the answer. Some also tended to lapse into narration of the plot, thereby limiting themselves to the lower reaches of the mark scheme. It is worth noting that narrative detail is a key descriptor of Level 2.

On Section B, the best answers used the question to build well-developed and focused answers that incorporated a balance of AO1, AO2 and AO4. Some insightful responses were seen that engaged fully with the question and provided detail from the text, chosen with discrimination to support arguments. As with Section A, the less successful answers tended to narrate or describe characters, sometimes interspersing this with relevant argument.

In Section B, it is imperative candidates remember that marks for context, AO4, are awarded in this section. AO1, AO2 and AO4 are of equal value. There were many responses seen across the questions in this section which did not refer to context at all or did so in a rather tokenistic way. Quite a few responses started with a general overview of the writer's life along with what life was like at the time the text was written. The most effective answers integrated points on context throughout, often to develop points for AO1 and AO2. Candidates should try and avoid hood-winking everything they know about the context of the text into their answers but instead select appropriate, relevant detail.

Further consideration of AO2 would also have helped many candidates to have achieved the higher marks. The strongest aspect of this assessment objective by far was the language element and there were many missed opportunities by candidates to consider aspects of form and structure. The mark schemes for the question papers, available on the Pearson Edexcel website, provide comprehensive suggestions as to what candidates may choose to write about. These can be particularly helpful for

candidates to use in preparation for the examination to think about the types of comments they might choose to make on form and structure, as well as context.

Finally, although there is no formal requirement for candidates to start their answers with an introduction and a conclusion, this can often help candidates to maintain a focus on the question. It can also help to spend a few minutes at the start of the examination to complete a plan. Not only can this help to ensure a focus on the question but it can also help candidates to think of the range of ideas they would like to include in their answer, ensuring full coverage of all the assessment objectives assessed.

## SECTION A - MODERN DRAMA

### ***A View from the Bridge***

#### **Question 1: How does Miller present the relationship between Eddie and Beatrice in the play?**

*A View from the Bridge* was the second most popular text in this section of the paper.

Candidates at all levels of ability in question 1 were able to consider several aspects of the relationship between Eddie and Beatrice, with many often tracking the changes in their relationship as the play progresses. The more successful responses were able to take more of a holistic approach, drawing evidence from across the text to establish arguments about how the relationship is presented.

Many candidates considered Eddie's growing, unnatural interest in Catherine and the impact of this on his relationship with Beatrice. There was some thoughtful exploration of the ending of the play, recognising the resilience of Beatrice's and Eddie's love.

More successful responses considered the nature of the text as a play and explored aspects of dramatic effects, including the stage directions, in their AO2 analysis to consider how the relationship between Eddie and Beatrice is presented in the play.

#### **Question 2:**

**'Hopes and dreams are important in *A View from the Bridge*.'**

#### **How far do you agree with this statement?**

Candidates appeared confident dealing with this theme and most answers were at least soundly argued and supported by relevant detail from the text. Responses considered the hopes and dreams of a range of characters, including those of Eddie, Beatrice, Rodolfo, Marco and Catherine.

There was much discussion of Eddie's forbidden dream about his niece, Catherine, and how this led to the loss of all his dreams, and, ultimately, his life. There was also some thoughtful analysis of the dire consequences on Marco's and Rodolfo's dreams, when Eddie reports them to the Immigration Bureau.

For AO2, there was much exploration of language, whilst detail on structure tended to refer to Eddie's hamartia being the significant dynamic in his fall, constantly referred to throughout the play. Points on form tended to focus on how the play is a tragedy, with the audience aware that the hopes and dreams of many of the characters are not likely to come to fruition.

## ***An Inspector Calls An Inspector Calls***

### **Question 3:**

**'Priestley presents Mr Arthur Birling and Inspector Goole as very different characters.'**

#### **How far do you agree with this view?**

Question 3 was the most popular question on the whole paper and by far the most popular question on *An Inspector Calls*. This question attracted some thoughtful responses focusing on how the two characters are different, with most candidates choosing to agree with the statement, backing effective arguments with apposite textual detail. There was much candidates could consider in this question, as evident in the wide range of responses seen. Responses typically focused on the characters' differing attitudes to class and responsibility. Even the less successful responses were at least able to consider the differences in the physical description of Mr Birling and the Inspector, with many candidates commenting on the form, in particular the stage directions, for AO2, to consider how the characters are presented.

There were also some particularly insightful responses which considered how the two characters are similar, such as how both characters are consistent in their viewpoints and how both characters are tunnel-visioned in not recognising any of the benefits of the other's ideological beliefs.

The responses which were not as successful, as with other questions on the paper, tended to describe the characters without referring closely to textual detail for AO2.

Candidates did approach this question in a manner of ways. Some explored each character in turn before offering a comparison of the two characters. The more successful answers did tend to deal with both characters at the same time, exploring their differing or similar attitudes to certain ideals or beliefs, or their interactions with other characters. This approach appeared to provide more opportunities for candidates to develop their arguments.

### **Question 4: In what ways are secrets important in An Inspector Calls?**

There was some clear and thoughtful understanding of the role of secrets in the play, considering the secrets of Mr Birling, Mrs Birling, Gerald, Sheila, Eric and the Inspector.

One approach by some candidates was to work through the characters one by one, relating each one to a secret uncovered during the play. This strategy tended to respond largely to AO1 with little opportunity to develop AO2 ideas.

More successful responses were able to comment on the methodical approach of the Inspector and how his approach contributed to the reveal of other secrets. There were



some insightful responses which challenged whether the secrets existed at all in the play; many clues are given to the audience throughout the play about the 'secrets' which are revealed. For example, Eric's drinking, Gerald's affair and even Mr Birling's treatment of Edna.

There was much for candidates to comment on here for AO2, with many considering the importance of secrets in the structure of the play; the play's premise relies on the exposure of secrets. There were also some responses which carefully considered the description of the Inspector's appearance and approach to his role as an 'Inspector', when analysing the secrets surrounding the Inspector.

### ***The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time***

#### **Question 5: Explore the importance of Mr and Mrs Shears in The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time.**

There were no responses to this question this series.

#### **Question 6: Discuss the significance of truth in the play.**

There were very few responses to this question this series. It was evident in the very few responses seen that there was much candidates could discuss for this question, not least because the events of the play are a direct result of Christopher's discovery of the truth about who killed Wellington. Responses tended to also focus on the many lies told by Christopher's father, Ed Boone.

### ***Kindertransport***

#### **Question 7:**

**'Samuels creates sympathy for most characters in the play.'**

**Who in the play do you most sympathise with and why?**

There were no responses to the questions on this text this series.

#### **Question 8: Explore the importance of different types of journey in Kindertransport.**

There were no responses to the questions on this text this series.

***Death and the King's Horseman***

**Question 9: Explore the theme of sacrifice in the play.**

**Question 10: How does Soyinka present Amusa and one other character who tries to do the right thing in *Death and the King's Horseman*?**

There were very few responses on this text. Both questions appeared accessible with lots candidates could explore, as exemplified by the indicative content in the mark scheme.

## SECTION B – LITERARY HERITAGE TEXTS

### ***Romeo and Juliet***

#### **Question 11:**

**‘Shakespeare presents many characters who could be considered responsible for the deaths of Romeo and Juliet.’**

**In your opinion, who is most responsible for the deaths of Romeo and Juliet?**

Romeo and Juliet was the most popular text in Section B with the vast majority of candidates answering question 11. Responses typically focused on how Friar Lawrence, Friar John and Tybalt were most responsible for the deaths of Romeo and Juliet. Other responses considered how Romeo’s and Juliet’s parents were most responsible for their deaths with some even placing responsibility with Romeo and Juliet themselves.

Some responses were well developed and supported with evidence of effective personal engagement. Candidates working at Levels 4 and 5 tended to engage confidently with the AO2 demands of the question with the most impressive answers dealing well with structure and form through discussion in particular of the lead up to the deaths of Romeo and Juliet, in particular Friar Lawrence’s language in warning Juliet of the potential consequences of the plan.

Less successful responses did not show an appreciation of Romeo and Juliet as a play and the dramatic effects created, and there was a tendency to describe and narrate rather than analyse and support. In particular, a number wrote straightforward character studies with only an implicit link to the focus of the question. These answers tended to limit themselves to the lower reaches of Level 3 and below.

Points relating to context were largely based on the religious beliefs of the time, in particular in relation to religion and suicide. There was also much discussion on the role of parents at the time, with regards to how Juliet refused to marry Paris against her father’s wishes and how she felt like there was no way out other than to pursue the Friar’s plan.

#### **Question 12: Explore the use of humour in Romeo and Juliet.**

There were only a few responses to question 12 which required candidates to write about the use of humour. This question attracted some very focused and lucid answers as well as some less successful responses. Responses tended to focus on the Nurse’s and Mercutio’s use of humour, and even the humour of the servants. However, some responses focused on particular parts of the play which were not overtly humorous.

A wide range of achievement was seen on this question with some candidates writing very little and making it hard to award Level 3 in terms of sound and secure subject

knowledge and understanding. The best answers considered a range of examples of humour in the play, considering its importance and impact on events in the play.

A particular difficulty with this question, as was evident in other questions on this section, relates to the variable use of AO4 context points by candidates. The best answers seamlessly included detail relating to context, using these points to support a strategic point. Less successful arguments offered comment on this aspect as a general overview of the life and times of Shakespeare or as an afterthought. Some candidates even failed to comment at all on any aspect of AO4. As an intrinsic part of the mark scheme, it is important that candidates include reference to some aspect of these elements in their answers.

References to context which were seen included how humour was used to keep the audience / groundlings engaged during the performances at the time.

In terms of AO2, some candidates wrote effectively and with analytical view about effects, the best of these considering Mercutio's Queen Mab speech in some depth.

### ***Macbeth***

#### **Question 13: Explore Shakespeare's use of the supernatural in Macbeth.**

Question 13 was the most popular question on this text which required candidates to write about Shakespeare's use of the supernatural in the play. This was well done by many candidates who discussed the use of supernatural throughout the play, considering how the supernatural often influenced the decisions of characters, acting as a turning point for many.

The majority of candidates could, at the very least, consider the role of the witches in the play and how the witches influenced the actions of Macbeth. There was much discussion on Macbeth's hallucination of the dagger and the sight of Banquo's ghost.

Some candidates also successfully considered the impact of the supernatural on Lady Macbeth. However, there was some tendency for candidates to stray away from the question at this point, thinking more generally about Lady Macbeth's deterioration.

AO4 was, for the most part, handled better on this question than on other questions in Section B, with candidates commonly referring to how the monarch of the time, James I, was interested in the supernatural and even wrote a book on the subject. Others commented on how witches were perceived at the time.

#### **Question 14: How is the character of Banquo presented in the play?**

A range of answers was seen with some very thorough and thoughtful responses covering the important role of Banquo in Macbeth. The best answers were well

structured and purposeful with effective arguments and relevant supporting detail. A few answers showed some misunderstanding of the character and his role in the play.

Some thoughtful responses were seen which explored the differing reactions of Macbeth and Banquo to the prophecies, considering how Banquo's choice of not acting on the prophecies represented his strength, and, contrastingly, Macbeth's acting on the prophecies marked his weakness.

The same issues with some candidates not addressing AO4 was seen here too. Nevertheless, there were some insightful responses which considered in some detail the distrust of witches at the time and how Banquo's reaction to the prophecies represented his moral and Christian strength.

For AO2, less successful responses tended to make general comments with little focused development or awareness of effects. For those who did focus more on AO2, responses often discussed the appearance of Banquo's ghost as well as the role Banquo played in contributing to the events of the play, markedly the impact the appearance of his ghost had on Macbeth's mental deterioration.

### ***The Merchant of Venice***

#### **Question 15: How does Shakespeare present Shylock's relationship with his daughter, Jessica, in the play?**

There were very few responses for either question on this text. The responses that were seen tended to be focused and lucid answers, exploring Shylock's possessive and controlling nature towards Jessica. There was also much discussion around Jessica's feelings towards her father. Context points were generally focused on father-daughter relationships and the significance of Jessica becoming a Christian.

#### **Question 16: Explore the significance of the title of the play, *The Merchant of Venice*.**

Only a small number of responses were seen for this question, with the majority of candidates opting to answer question 15 on this text. Nevertheless, the responses seen were confident and tended to cover a range of points.

As was the case with responses to other questions in this section, AO4 was omitted by some candidates.

## ***Pride and Prejudice***

### **Question 17:**

**'All the world are good and agreeable in your eyes.' (Elizabeth)**

**How far do you agree with this view of Jane Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*?**

There were also very few responses on this text. The responses that were seen demonstrated clear engagement with the character of Jane Bennet and applied relevant detail to points.

AO2 was handled largely in terms of Jane's interactions with other characters, particularly her sister, Elizabeth Bennet, and Mr Collins.

There was some inclusion of AO4 in some answers, although application was inconsistent.

### **Question 18: Explore the theme of ambition in the novel.**

Only a handful of responses were seen on this question but those who did choose this question effectively explored the theme of ambition with valid support applied and a relevant focus on a number of characters showing some of ambition during the novel.

Candidates engaged at a personal level with this question, identifying how even characters such as Jane Bennet and her father, Mr Bennet, show ambition, or at least hope, in some form or another.

Candidates seemed more able to address AO4 here, with many considering entailment and the expectation of women like the Bennet sisters to get married; marriage was often the sole ambition of unmarried women (or at least the ambition their parents had for them). Some very thoughtful and effective work was seen with candidates presenting original ideas alongside the established view of this theme in the play, such as Elizabeth's contrasting view of marriage from her sisters.

## ***Great Expectations***

### **Question 19: Discuss the role of women in *Great Expectations*.**

There were very few responses to this question. The responses that were seen showed some insight into the roles of characters such as Miss Havisham, Mrs Joe and Estella in the novel.

**Question 20:**

**'Characters who commit evil actions are central to the plot.'**

**How does Dickens present villains in the novel?**

There were very few responses to this question.

With this question it could be tempting to offer a narrative recall of different evil actions but more effective responses should avoid this approach. Narrative is a Level 2 descriptor.

***The Scarlet Letter***

**Question 21: How does Hawthorne present the relationship between Hester Prynne and Roger Chillingworth in the novel?**

**Question 22: Explore the significance of the novel's title, The Scarlet Letter.**

Although only a handful of responses were seen across these two questions, it was apparent that there was much candidates could explore. With question 21, Hester Prynne's and Roger Chillingworth's relationship is central to the entire plot of the novel. Likewise with question 22, the Scarlet Letter, as per the title, symbolises Hester's adultery which drives the plot for the duration of the novel.

## Top Tips

As a summary, here are some top tips for candidates to follow for this paper:

- There is a choice of two questions for each text. Candidates are able to play to their strengths by selecting the question they feel most confident with.
- Candidates are advised to spend 45 minutes on each section.
- The indicative content in the mark scheme shows possible points candidates might make in their answer. However, these are just suggested points; any relevant ideas are rewarded.
- A brief introduction and conclusion can help to ensure that responses remain focused on the question.
- A brief plan at the start can help candidates to think of the range of points they would like to include in their essay.
- If there is a quotation given in the question, candidates can use this as stimulus for their answer (perhaps as a starting point).
- In Section A, both AO1 and AO2 are assessed.
- Remember, AO1 and AO2 are of equal value in Section A.
- Context (AO4) is not assessed in section A
- There are three parts to AO1:
  - o demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the text
  - o maintain a critical style
  - o present an informed critical style
- For AO1, candidates should show their knowledge and understanding of the text through the scope and depth of examples selected from across the text.
- As part of AO1, candidates are required to provide examples to support points. As an open book exam, this is likely to be quotations from the text. However, depending on the point being made, this could still be a paraphrase or a reference to a specific part of the play.
- Candidates are able to show personal engagement for AO1 by offering their own individual thoughts on relevant ideas.
- Quotations should be selected carefully, which fully support the points being made; precise quotations, such as a word or a phrase, are more likely to show the necessary discrimination in the selection of evidence.
- Responses which re-tell the story are typical of Level 2, where the key descriptor is 'largely narrative'.
- For AO2, candidates should not just consider language but also form and structure.
- Although the mark scheme does not specify the need to use literary terminology, this could well help candidates to focus on the need to explore language, form and structure for AO2.
- Form, for AO2, could include:
  - o the type of text
  - o the physical organisation of the text, including stage directions
  - o the genre
  - o use of prose / verse.



- More successful responses will intertwine the assessment objectives to fully develop ideas.
- Finding examples from across the text to support a point can help to develop ideas.
- The Point, Evidence, Explanation (PEE) approach can help candidates to achieve a mark at least in Level 3.
- Remember, in addition to AO1 and AO2, context (AO4) is assessed in Section B.
- For context (AO4), candidates could comment on a number of aspects, including:
  - o the author's life
  - o the historical setting, time and location
  - o social and cultural context
  - o the literary context
  - o how the text is received at different times
- Candidates should try to avoid providing a summary of what they know about the writer and try to select appropriate points for context which support the ideas in the main part of their essay.
- The most successful responses tend to integrate references to context throughout, often using context to support and develop points for AO1 and AO2.

