

IGCSE

English Literature

Teacher's guide

Edexcel IGCSE in English Literature (4ET0)

First examination 2011

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Introduction

The Edexcel International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) in English Literature is designed for schools and colleges. It is part of a suite of IGCSE qualifications offered by Edexcel.

About this guide

This guide is for teachers who are delivering or planning to deliver the Edexcel IGCSE in English Literature qualification. The guide supports you in delivering the course content and explains how to raise the attainment of your students; it should be looked at in conjunction with the following publications:

- the IGCSE English Literature (4ET0) specification
- the IGCSE English Literature (4ET0) sample assessment materials (SAMs) (which includes the mark schemes)
- the *Edexcel Anthology for IGCSE English Language (Specification A) and IGCSE English Literature* (available on our website).

The guide:

- expands on the information about course requirements in the specification
- explains assessment procedures
- suggests teaching approaches to the set texts
- suggests teaching approaches to some of the anthology pieces
- gives examples of course planning.

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Why choose this qualification?

The Edexcel IGCSE in English Literature (4ET0) qualification enables students to:

- engage with and develop the ability to read, understand and respond to a wide range of literary texts from around the world
- develop an appreciation of the ways in which authors achieve their literary effects and to develop the skills needed for literary study
- explore, through literature, the cultures of their own and other societies
- find enjoyment in reading literature and understand its influence on individuals and societies.

Key features and benefits of the qualification

- Incorporates elements of the legacy Edexcel GCE O Level English Literature (7171).
- Encourages the reading of literature from around the world.
- A free anthology, produced by Edexcel, is available to download at the beginning of the course and contains a wide range of reading material.
- Two routes of assessment: 100% examination, or 70% examination and 30% coursework (Edexcel-approved teaching institutions only).
- Assessment opportunities in January and June examination series.
- Provides progression to Edexcel GCE AS and Advanced Level in English Literature or equivalent qualifications.

Visit www.edexcel.com/igcse2009 for more information about this IGCSE and related resources.

Support from Edexcel

We are dedicated to giving you exceptional customer service. Details of our main support services are given below. They will all help you to keep up to date with IGCSE 2009.

Website

Our dedicated microsite www.edexcel.com/igcse2009 is where you will find the resources and information you need to successfully deliver IGCSE qualifications. To stay ahead of all the latest developments visit the microsite and sign up for our email alerts.

Ask Edexcel

Ask Edexcel is our free, comprehensive online enquiry service. Use Ask Edexcel to get the answer to your queries about the administration of all Edexcel qualifications. To ask a question please go to www.edexcel.com/ask and fill out the online form.

Ask the Expert

This free service puts teachers in direct contact with over 200 senior examiners, moderators and external verifiers who will respond to subject-specific queries about IGCSE 2009 and other Edexcel qualifications.

You can contact our experts via email or by completing our online form. For contact details go to our website (www.edexcel.com/asktheexpert).

Regional offices

If you have any queries about the IGCSE 2009 qualifications, or if you are interested in offering other Edexcel qualifications your Regional Development Manager can help you. Go to www.edexcel.com/international for details of our regional offices.

Head Office – London

If you have a question about IGCSE 2009 and are not sure who to ask, email us on IGCSE2009@edexcel.com or call our Customer Services Team on +44 (0) 1204770696.

Training

A programme of professional development and training courses, covering various aspects of the specification and examination is available. Go to www.edexcel.com for details.

Section A: Qualification content

Introduction

- The IGCSE in English Literature (4ET0) is based on the legacy Edexcel IGCSE in English Literature (4360) and the legacy Edexcel GCE O Level in English Literature (7171) – incorporating successful elements of both.
- The IGCSE in English Literature (4ET0) comprises two assessment routes:
 - route one – 100% written examination paper (Paper 1 and Paper 2)
 - route two – 70% written examination paper and 30% internally assessed coursework (Paper 1 and Paper 3).
- Paper 1: Drama and Prose is taken by all students, and makes up 70% of the total qualification. The paper is divided into **two** sections: Drama and Prose. Students must answer **one** question from each section. There is a choice of **two** questions for each text in both sections. Texts must **not** be taken into the examination.
- Paper 2: Poetry is the examination alternative to coursework. Three questions will be set, one on an unprepared poem and two on poems from Section C of the Edexcel *Anthology for IGCSE English Language (Specification A) and English Literature*. Students must answer one question. Copies of the anthology may **not** be taken into the examination. (All the poems from the anthology will be printed in a poetry booklet as an insert to the examination paper.)
- Paper 3: Poetry Coursework is available as an alternative to the 100% examination route of study. Students must complete one assignment based on at least six poems – three poems in depth from Section C of the *Edexcel Anthology for IGCSE English Language (Specification A) and English Literature* plus three other poems.

Literature texts and poems

- All students must study **one** Drama text from the prescribed list, **one** Prose text from the prescribed list, and **all** poems from Section C of the *Edexcel Anthology for IGCSE English Language (Specification A) and English Literature*
- **Drama**
 - Arthur Miller: *A View from The Bridge*
 - J B Priestley: *An Inspector Calls*
 - William Shakespeare: *Romeo and Juliet*
 - Oscar Wilde: *The Importance of Being Earnest*
 - Thornton Wilder: *Our Town*
- **Prose**
 - Jane Austen: *Pride and Prejudice*
 - R K Narayan: *The English Teacher*
 - John Steinbeck: *Of Mice and Men*
 - Mildred Taylor: *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*
 - Nineteenth Century Short Stories (Edited by Mike Hamlin, Christine Hall and Jan Browne, Heinemann New Windmill) – All stories in the collection are prescribed.
- **Section C of the anthology**
 - If*— Rudyard Kipling
 - Prayer Before Birth* — Louis MacNeice
 - Half-past Two* — U A Fanthorpe
 - Piano* — D H Lawrence
 - Hide and Seek* — Vernon Scannell
 - Sonnet 116* ('Let me not to the marriage ...') — Shakespeare
 - La Belle Dame Sans Merci* — John Keats
 - Poem at Thirty-Nine* — Alice Walker
 - Telephone Conversation* — Wole Soyinka
 - Once Upon a Time* — Gabriel Okara
 - War Photographer* — Carol Ann Duffy
 - The Tyger* — William Blake
 - My Last Duchess* — Robert Browning
 - A Mother in a Refugee Camp* — Chinua Achebe
 - Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night* — Dylan Thomas
 - Remember* — Christina Rossetti

Information for Edexcel centres

The Edexcel IGCSE in English Literature (4ET0) qualification amalgamates elements from the legacy Edexcel GCE O Level English Literature (7171) as well as from the legacy Edexcel IGCSE in English Literature (4360) in a way that is designed to ensure maximum continuity for those centres which are familiar with using either of these specifications, and to attract other centres. The following table sums up how this amalgamation has taken place, incorporating elements from each of the legacy O Level and IGCSE specifications, retaining texts which have proved successful in each specification, as well as introducing some new material.

Changes to content from Edexcel O Level/IGCSE (7171/4360) to this qualification (4ET0)

The table below sets out the relationship between the legacy O level/IGCSE qualifications (7171 and 4360) to this qualification (4ET0).

Topic	This qualification	Legacy O Level (7171) qualification	Legacy IGCSE (4360) qualification
Assessment Objectives	Three	Unchanged	Unchanged
	AO1: a close knowledge of texts and the contexts in which they were written	Unchanged	Unchanged
	AO2: understanding and appreciation of the craft of the writer	AO2: the ability to communicate focused, sensitive, lively and informed personal response (new AO3)	Unchanged
	AO3: a focused, sensitive, lively and informed personal response	AO3: some understanding and appreciation of authors' use of the following as appropriate: characterization, narrative, plot, setting and language (new AO2)	Unchanged
	All AOs equally weighted at 33.3%	Unchanged	Unchanged
Prescribed literature	Paper 1: 5 plays and 5 prose Paper 2: 16 poems	Paper 1: 4 plays, 10 prose and 20 poems	Paper 1: 5 plays and 5 prose Paper 2: 15 poems

Changes to assessment from Edexcel O Level/IGCSE (7171/4360) to this qualification (4ET0)

Topic	This qualification	Legacy O Level (7171) qualification	Legacy IGCSE (4360) qualification
Structure of the examination	Route one – Paper 1 and Paper 2 (100% examination) Route two – Paper 1 and Paper 3 (70% examination and 30% coursework)	Single Paper – 100% examination	Unchanged
	Paper 1: Drama and Prose (70%) Closed text examination paper of 1½ hours. Section A: Drama Students answer one question on one play (marked out of 30). Section B, Prose Students answer one question on one text (marked out of 30).	One closed text examination paper of 2½ hours with four sections: A Drama B Poetry C Prose pre-1950 D Prose post-1950 One question in each section to be answered: equal weighting, 25% for each question (marked out of 40).	Paper 1 (Drama and Prose): (70%) Closed text examination paper of 1½ hours. Section A: Drama Students answer one question on one play (marked out of 40). Section B: Prose Students answer one question on one play (marked out of 40).
	Paper 2: Poetry (30%) 45 minutes Students answer one question from a choice of three (marked out of 30). One question set on an unprepared poem and two questions set on Section C of the prescribed anthology. A poetry booklet is provided in the examination.	n/a	Paper 2: Poetry: 45 minutes (30%) (marked out of 40). No unseen poem question option.
	Paper 3: Poetry Coursework (30%) Students write in depth about at least three poems from the prescribed Poetry Anthology and make reference to at least three further poems which may be drawn from outside Section C.	No coursework option	Largely unchanged – some amendment to poetry requirement.
Grade range	A* to G	A to E	Unchanged

Prescribed literature

The tables below show in detail how this qualification has built on elements of each of the legacy qualifications in the selection of literature for the set texts and in the anthology. Where the text is the same as a previous selection it appears in bold.

Drama

This qualification (4ET0)	Legacy O Level (7171) qualification	Legacy IGCSE (4360) qualification
William Shakespeare – <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (new)	William Shakespeare – <i>Julius Caesar</i>	William Shakespeare – <i>Julius Caesar</i>
Oscar Wilde – <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>	William Shakespeare – <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	Oscar Wilde – <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>
J B Priestley – <i>An Inspector Calls</i> (new)	Terence Rattigan – <i>The Winslow Boy</i>	Henrik Ibsen – <i>A Doll's House</i>
Arthur Miller – <i>A View from The Bridge</i>	Tennessee Williams – <i>The Glass Menagerie</i>	Arthur Miller – <i>A View from The Bridge</i>
Thornton Wilder – <i>Our Town</i> (new)	n/a	Athol Fugard – <i>My Children! My Africa!</i>

Prose

This qualification (4ET0)	Legacy O Level (7171) qualification	Legacy IGCSE (4360) qualification
Jane Austen – <i>Pride and Prejudice</i>	Jane Austen – <i>Northanger Abbey</i>	Jane Austen – <i>Pride and Prejudice</i>
<i>Nineteenth Century Short Stories</i> – Edited by M Hamlin, C Hall and J Browne (Heinemann New Windmill)	<i>Nineteenth Century Short Stories</i> – Edited by M Hamlin, C Hall and J Browne (Heinemann New Windmill)	<i>Stories from around the world</i> – Edited by Hilary Patel (Heinemann New Windmill)
R K Narayan – <i>The English Teacher</i>	Aldous Huxley – <i>Brave New World</i>	R K Narayan – <i>The English Teacher</i>
Mildred Taylor – <i>Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry</i> (new)	Chinua Achebe – <i>Things Fall Apart</i>	Chinua Achebe – <i>A Man of the People</i>
John Steinbeck – <i>Of Mice and Men</i> (new)	F Scott Fitzgerald – <i>The Great Gatsby</i>	Dai Sijie – <i>Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress</i>
n/a	E R Braithwaite – <i>To Sir With Love</i>	n/a
n/a	Anita Desai – <i>The Village By The Sea</i>	n/a
n/a	Thomas Hardy – <i>Far From the Madding Crowd</i>	n/a
n/a	Gerald Durrell – <i>My Family and Other Animals</i>	n/a
n/a	John Wyndham – <i>The Chrysalids</i>	n/a

Poetry

This qualification (4ET0)	Legacy O Level (7171) qualification	Legacy IGCSE (4360) qualification
U A Fanthorpe – <i>Half-past Two</i>	Alfred, Lord Tennyson – <i>The Lady of Shalott</i>	U A Fanthorpe – <i>Half-past Two</i>
Louis MacNeice – <i>Prayer Before Birth</i>	Louis MacNeice – <i>Prayer Before Birth</i>	Moniza Alvi – <i>An Unknown Girl</i>
Rudyard Kipling – <i>If</i>	Rudyard Kipling – <i>If</i>	Rudyard Kipling – <i>If</i>
D H Lawrence – <i>Piano</i>	T S Eliot – <i>Preludes</i>	D H Lawrence – <i>Piano</i>
Vernon Scannell – <i>Hide and Seek (new)</i>	Henry Longfellow – <i>The Slave’s Dream</i>	Rita Anyiam St John – <i>For Me From You</i>
William Shakespeare – <i>Sonnet 116</i> (‘ <i>Let me not to the marriage...’</i>) (new)	William Shakespeare – <i>The Seven Ages of Man</i>	Thomas Hardy – <i>Plena Timoris</i>
John Keats – <i>La Belle Dame Sans Merci</i>	John Keats – <i>La Belle Dame Sans Merci</i>	Juana Ines de La Cruz — <i>World! Why do you hound me?</i>
Alice Walker – <i>Poem at Thirty-Nine</i>	D H Lawrence – <i>Mosquito</i>	Alice Walker – <i>Poem at Thirty-Nine</i>
Wole Soyinka – <i>Telephone Conversation</i>	Wole Soyinka – <i>Telephone Conversation</i>	Zulfiker Ghose – <i>Geography Lesson</i>
Carol Ann Duffy – <i>War Photographer</i>	Carol Ann Duffy – <i>War Photographer</i>	Carol Ann Duffy – <i>In Your Mind</i>
William Blake – <i>The Tyger</i>	William Blake – <i>The Tyger</i>	Allama Mohammed Iqbal – <i>Poem</i>
Robert Browning – <i>My Last Duchess (new)</i>	Ted Hughes – <i>Six Young Men</i>	Phyllis McCormack – <i>Crabbit Old Woman</i>
Chinua Achebe – <i>A Mother in a Refugee Camp*</i>	Elizabeth Daryush – <i>Children of Wealth in Your Warm Nursery</i>	Chinua Achebe – <i>Refugee Mother and Child*</i>
Dylan Thomas – <i>Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night</i>	Dylan Thomas – <i>Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night</i>	Stephen Spender – <i>My Parents kept me from Children who were Rough</i>
Christina Rossetti – <i>Remember</i>	Fleur Adcock – <i>The Telephone Call</i>	Christina Rossetti – <i>Remember</i>
Gabriel Okara – <i>Once Upon a Time</i>	Gabriel Okara – <i>Once Upon a Time</i>	n/a
n/a	Grace Nichols – <i>Island Man</i>	n/a
n/a	W H Auden – <i>Night Mail</i>	n/a
n/a	Simon Armitage – <i>Poem</i>	n/a
n/a	Lord Byron – <i>When We Two Parted</i>	n/a

***Please note that a different version of the poem is used in the anthology (4ET0)**

Information for centres starting the Edexcel IGCSE for the first time

- For those who are new to this qualification, there are alternative approaches for dealing with poetry (either as a written paper or as a coursework option). Notes with detailed guidance and suggestions for course planning, together with examples of students' work at key grades, are all in this guide – together with comments on the levels achieved.
- All the reading material required is in the free anthology which is downloadable from our website – therefore no additional books need to be purchased, no matter what course has previously been followed.
- This guide includes many practical examples to aid delivery so that new centres can understand clearly what is needed.
- The flexibility of the qualification (with its two routes) caters for a range of different circumstances.

Section B: Assessment

This section summarises the alternative routes which can be taken: Paper 1 is the compulsory unit; Paper 2 is taken by those opting for the 100% examination route. Those who opt for coursework take Paper 3 instead of Paper 2.

Route one – 100% written examination paper (Paper 1 and Paper 2)

Route two – 70% written examination paper and 30% internally assessed coursework (Paper 1 and Paper 3).

Assessment overview

The table below gives an overview of the assessment for this course.

We recommend that you make this information available to students to help ensure they are fully prepared and know exactly what to expect in each assessment.

Route one

Paper 1	Percentage	Marks	Time	Availability
Written paper Drama and Prose Paper code: 4ET0/01	70%	60	One hour and 30 minutes	January and June examination series First assessment June 2011
Paper 2	Percentage	Marks	Time	Availability
Written paper Poetry Paper code: 4ET0/02	30%	30	45 minutes	January and June examination series First assessment June 2011

Route two

Paper 1	Percentage	Marks	Time	Availability
Written paper Drama and Prose Paper code: 4ET0/01	70%	60	One hour and 30 minutes	January and June examination series First assessment June 2011
Paper 3	Percentage	Marks	Time	Availability
Coursework Poetry Paper code: 4ET0/03	30%	30	n/a	June examination series First submission June 2011

Assessment Objectives and weightings

The three Assessment Objectives (AO) are given equal weight in this qualification, and in each paper. These percentages are not intended to provide a precise statement of the number of marks allocated to particular assessment objectives.

	% in IGCSE
AO1: a close knowledge of texts and the contexts in which they were written	33 $\frac{1}{3}$ %
AO2: understanding and appreciation of authors' uses of the following as appropriate: characterisation, narrative, plot, setting and language	33 $\frac{1}{3}$ %
AO3: a focused, sensitive, lively and informed personal response to texts	33 $\frac{1}{3}$ %
Total	100%

Notes on the Assessment Objectives

AO1

'**Close knowledge**' of the set texts is essential, especially since the examinations are largely 'closed text'. Students are not permitted to bring copies of the set texts into the examination with them. This is to ensure fairness: it would be impossible for Edexcel International to ensure that texts used in an examination did not have additional notes, printed or handwritten, to aid the students.

Close knowledge may be demonstrated in the way the students range across the text in their answers, showing understanding of the whole as well as the significance of specific incidents or speeches. Students should support their points either by referring to particular moments in the text ('*this is clearly shown when Juliet tells Romeo that...*'), or by memorised quotations. Examiners look for well-chosen details from the texts, but these need not take the form of direct quotations.

In Paper 2, all the poems from Section C of the *Edexcel Anthology for IGCSE English Language (Specification A) and IGCSE English Literature* will be printed as a poetry booklet additional to the examination paper. Students may not take their copies of the Poetry Anthology into the examination.

'**The contexts in which (texts) were written**' may be examined through questions which ask about the society in which a text is set. The answer should always be rooted in the text and how the text reveals the social or cultural setting; it should not be a historical or sociological essay, divorced from the text.

AO2

'**Characterisation, narrative, plot, setting and language**' refers to the techniques used by the writer to achieve effects. These may be specific to prose, poetry or drama. For example, in prose texts the techniques may involve how the narrative is developed; whether there is a third or first person narrator; how characters and themes are presented to the reader. In drama texts, the emphasis will be on dramatic techniques: how words and actions reveal character; how dialogue is used in the interaction between characters; how dramatic contrast is used to highlight differences between characters, moods and actions. In poetry, the techniques will be stylistic, such as use of imagery and adjectives, or how verse form is used.

‘**Understanding**’ implies that the student shows a grasp of the techniques.

‘**Appreciation**’ suggests an ability to explore the effects of those techniques, and an evaluation of their use in the text.

AO3

‘**Personal response**’ is shown when a student engages with a text in an individual way. The questions are designed to allow students to explore, in detail, a specific point or technique, which provide a focus for the student’s response. Successful answers will be clearly structured around the keywords of the question; less successful answers will tend to be coached, over-prepared responses which are not focused on the question. There is nothing to be gained from students’ learning stock answers to imaginary questions by heart. The outcome of such an approach will be the opposite of the ‘focused, sensitive, lively and informed personal response’ required by the Assessment Objective.

Assessment summary

Paper 1	Description
<p>Written paper</p> <p>Drama and Prose</p> <p>Paper code: 4ET0/01</p>	<p>Taken by all students.</p> <p>Assessment of this paper is through a one-hour and 30-minute examination, set and marked by Edexcel.</p> <p>The examination is untiered and will be targeted at students across the ability range A* - G.</p> <p>The paper is divided into two sections: Drama and Prose. Students must answer one question from each section.</p> <p>There is a choice of two questions for each text in both sections.</p> <p>This is a closed book examination – texts may not be taken into the examination.</p>
Paper 2	Description
<p>Written paper</p> <p>Poetry</p> <p>Paper code: 4ET0/02</p>	<p>Available to students following route one of assessment (100% examination) only</p> <p>Assessment of this paper is through a 45-minute examination, set and marked by Edexcel.</p> <p>The examination is untiered and will be targeted at students across the ability range A* - G.</p> <p>There will be a choice of three questions on the paper. Students must answer one question.</p> <p>One question will be set on an unprepared poem and another two questions will be set on poems from Section C of the <i>Edexcel Anthology for IGCSE English Language (Specification A) and IGCSE English Literature</i>.</p> <p>All the poems from the anthology will be printed in a poetry booklet as an insert to the examination paper.</p> <p>Students are not permitted to take copies of the anthology into the examination with them.</p>
Paper 3	Description
<p>Coursework</p> <p>Poetry</p> <p>Paper code: 4ET0/03</p>	<p>Available to students following route two of assessment (30% coursework) only</p> <p>The coursework option is open to centres who have been approved by Edexcel to conduct coursework.</p> <p>The assessment of this paper is through one coursework assignment, internally set and assessed and externally moderated by Edexcel.</p> <p>Coursework assignments must be based on a selection of at least three poems in depth from Section C of the <i>Edexcel Anthology for IGCSE English Language (Specification A) and IGCSE English Literature</i> with reference to at least three further poems which may be drawn from outside of Section C of the anthology.</p> <p>Typically assignments may be between 1000 and 1500 words, but there are no penalties for exceeding this guidance.</p>

Examination questions

Styles of questions

These examples of different types of examination question are taken from the sample assessment materials (SAMs) for the course and from some earlier support material. A few examples of student responses, together with the examiners' comments, are given where these are available, in order to enable users to see what standard is required for both grade C and grade A.

Paper 1

Section A: Drama texts

Questions on the drama texts tend to follow a pattern: one question will usually focus on characterisation; the other question will examine another aspect of the play, such as dramatic qualities; theme; structure; social/cultural setting.

Example (a)

A View from the Bridge: By the end of the play, do you find yourself sympathising with Eddie or criticising him?

This type of question explicitly asks for a judgement, a personal response. It is a good example of how successful students cannot simply regurgitate learnt notes: they need to use their knowledge of the play to respond to a specific question.

Example (b)

A View from the Bridge: Some audiences feel angry about the behaviour of the male characters in this play.

How far is Eddie presented as unsympathetic in his dealings with other characters?

Example (c)

An Inspector Calls: 'Sheila is the most interesting character in the play, because the writer allows her to change and develop'. How far do you agree with this comment?

An example of a student response to this example is given overleaf.

Student response to Drama – Example (c)

As a character, Sheila certainly changes and develops greatly during the course of the play. At first, she seems frivolous and flippant when faced by the Inspector. When he mentions Milwards, she begins commenting 'archly' to Gerald about her wedding again. Although she does seem concerned about the girl, the audience is shown that she has a temperamental attitude by her having Smith fired in the first place.

After she sees the picture, however, her attitude changes. She 'lets out a half-stifled sob' and admits herself to have behaved wrongly almost immediately. She says to Eric 'I'll never do it again to anybody', showing that she has been affected and accepts a degree of responsibility. She is also very receptive to the Inspector's influence. She exclaims to Gerald: 'Why he knows, of course he knows!', perhaps indicating that she is more susceptible to being changed than the other characters.

By the end of the play, Sheila could be said to be a reformed character. She is keenly aware of what she has done and learned from her actions. When she discovers the Inspector's deception, she says 'I suppose we're all nice people now', ironically, which shows that she understands that the moral consequences of her actions reach beyond the consequences that apply directly and only to her and her family, such as the arrest of Eric. In this way she proves that she has developed over the course of the play.

This change stands as a striking contrast to the other characters, who have learned nothing. When Sybil is asked why they shouldn't behave just as they did before, she replies 'Well, why not?' Gerald even offers Sheila her ring back, as if he had not had an affair. In this way the older characters show that they have not developed or changed, while Sheila clearly has.

However, there is another character who learns and changes during the course of the play - Eric. From having quite an unformed personality he also shows that he is penitent by the end of the play. While the others are talking about whether their reputation is in danger, Eric cuts in with 'The girl's still dead, isn't she?' As he says, 'I'll never forget', he shows that the whole affair has changed him. He therefore rivals Sheila in complexity of character.

At the beginning of the play, Sheila seems silly and frivolous. However, the Inspector has a powerful effect on her. By the end of the last act, she has truly learned. The older characters, by contrast, learn nothing. Whether or not Sheila is the most interesting character is debatable, as Eric also develops interestingly during the play. But despite the changes he is still shown to be immature, whereas Sheila's repentance is the equal of his and she has plainly gained more in depth and maturity from the disconcerting experiences she has undergone, even though her own guilt might be seen as much less than that of others.

Examiner's comments

This is a **grade A** answer overall. It has a very perceptive grasp of character, based on a thorough understanding. The examples that are quoted are apt and support the points in a highly effective way. There is a good focus on the question's requirements throughout. To have secured an A*, the comparative analysis on Sheila in relation to the other characters should have been developed more strongly; apart from occasional references, we have little focus on what makes them interesting or not.

Example (d)

An Inspector Calls: Which two characters are most influenced by the Inspector?

Give reasons for your choices.

Example (e)

Romeo and Juliet: What do we learn about the character of Romeo as the play progresses?

Example (f)

Romeo and Juliet: The contrast of youth and old age is important in this play.

How far do you agree with this statement?

Example (g)

The Importance of Being Earnest: Compare and contrast the characters of Algernon and Jack.

A *compare and contrast* question requires students to explore similarities and differences, referring to words and actions in support of their points.

Example (h)

The Importance of Being Earnest: What do we learn of the society portrayed in *The Importance of Being Earnest*? Explain what aspects of this society Wilde appeared to dislike.

This question touches on the society of the play as it is revealed by the characters' words and actions. It asks the student to consider how the writer's views are implicitly conveyed in the drama.

Example (i)

Our Town: In what ways does the Stage Manager introduce the setting and characters of the town of Grover's Corners?

Example (j)

Our Town: How important is the theme of time in *Our Town*?

Section B: Prose texts

Questions on the prose texts follow a similar pattern to the drama questions. One question will usually focus on characterisation; the other question will examine another aspect of the text, such as theme, or social/cultural setting.

Example (a)

Pride and Prejudice: Do you think that Austen is more successful in presenting male or female characters? In your answer, you should refer to at least one male and one female character.

Example (b)

Pride and Prejudice: Analyse how Jane Austen explores the difficulties to be overcome in relationships between men and women.

An example of a student response to this example is given below.

Student response to Prose – Example (b)

I shall examine this question by referring to two key relationships in the novel, those formed by the central characters, the sisters Jane and Lizzy Bennet. The two sisters Lizzy and Jane are as different as one could imagine, as are the characters and attitudes of Darcy and Bingley. They are introduced in the plot in such a way that we are left wondering for a long time whether the characters will be able to overcome the obstacles in their relationships and find true happiness or be defeated by the difficulties they face.

Jane Austen illustrates the differences through the sisters' attitudes to marriage and to men. She clearly shows that Lizzy is very intelligent and enjoys debating on different issues and giving her opinion, and that she wants a marriage of two minds. She will not marry for money or for convenience, as some other characters in the novel do.

Jane wants to marry purely on love and affection towards her partner, but does not express such strong views as Lizzy. We can also see how different Bingley and Darcy are, as is shown through their attitudes towards the women at the Netherfield Ball. Bingley is shown to be very caring and pleasant towards others and very light-hearted,

'Upon my honour, I have never met with so many pleasant girls'. Darcy however is shown to be very proud and the reader's first impressions of him are quite disappointing, as he says of Lizzy: 'She is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me'. This is not a good start for their relationship.

Jane and Bingley are both quiet, gentle and open minded towards others; however, this polite characteristic makes it more difficult for them both to show their feelings towards each other. Bingley's character means he will not tell Jane how he feels about her and therefore Jane does not tell Bingley how she feels towards him; therefore they are both unaware of each other's feelings.

From the moment that Jane and Bingley meet, Jane Austen shows how Bingley really feels about Jane. At the Netherfield Ball Jane and Bingley recognise an instant liking towards each other when they are first introduced. Jane Austen shows Jane's and Bingley's relationship developing as she has to stay at Netherfield with Bingley and Darcy, after visiting the Bingleys. The Bingley sisters are used by Austen to cause problems in the developing relationships between both Bingley and Jane and Darcy and Lizzy.

Darcy's pride and Lizzy's prejudice against his character affect Darcy's and Lizzy's first introduction when Lizzy first hears Darcy insulting her: 'I could easily forgive his pride, if he had not mortified mine'. Lizzy's stay at Netherfield to comfort Jane during her illness shows the significant differences between Bingley and Darcy. While Lizzy is there, she can see how deeply Bingley cares for Jane. However, she also recognises the jealousy of the sisters and their feeling of superiority.

Darcy's feelings towards Lizzy change as she is able to engage in intellectual conversations with him and Bingley; he appreciates her intelligence and 'the beautiful expression of her dark eyes'. Jane Austen introduces Bingley's sisters and shows how they can be obstacles in a developing relationship. The interference of the sisters is shown as they try to persuade Darcy to turn against Lizzy, remarking on her muddy gown after walking through the fields to visit Jane and her rather unsuitable family.

Wickham's refreshing and charming manner appeals to Lizzy and she is persuaded by his views on Darcy. Just as Darcy was persuaded by the Bingley sisters to turn against Lizzy, Wickham is turning Lizzy against Darcy. 'I hope your plans in favour of the -shire will not be affected by his being in the neighbourhood'. This is one difficulty that Lizzy and Darcy must overcome if they are to find true happiness with each other. Darcy's affection for Lizzy grows and Jane Austen shows this when Darcy asks Lizzy to dance.

Lizzy's difficulties in her relationship with Mr Darcy are influenced by her outspoken views. These are also shown in her wish to have a marriage of two minds. She rejects Mr Collins's proposal of marriage because she knows she will not find happiness with him.

This dilemma reveals how Jane Austen shows how a separate affection by another man can cause difficulties within a relationship, which is also something which her feelings towards Wickham illustrate. After Wickham's failure to turn up to the Netherfield Ball and his subsequent attentions to Miss King, Lizzy realises her feelings for Wickham are not as strong as she had thought they were, but it is Darcy's letter which finally reveals how shallow Wickham is. Lizzy's interest in Mr Wickham is therefore an obstacle which she has to overcome, to secure her developing relationship with Darcy.

Lizzy's strong feelings are revealed, in contrast to the way Jane puts up with Bingley's move from Netherfield. When Bingley stays in London for the winter, Lizzy knows how his sisters were interfering and she is angry for Jane. Because Jane keeps her feelings to herself only Lizzy knows the pain that Jane is feeling: 'Her heart was divided between concern for her sister, and her resentment against all others'. Her anger leads Lizzy to tell Darcy about his cruel involvement in separating Bingley and Jane, and this creates the opportunity for the obstacles to be overcome, as Darcy is able to reveal to Bingley his part in keeping the knowledge of Jane's presence in London a secret.

Lady Catherine de Bourgh is the final obstacle for Darcy and Lizzy. Ironically, however, her visit to Longfield to keep Lizzy and Darcy apart has the opposite effect. Darcy's hopes are raised by Lizzy's determined response to Lady Catherine, and from this point the two are able to pursue their relationship unhindered.

Similarly, despite the obstacles and difficulties that have been put in their way, Jane's and Bingley's relationship quickly develops on his return to Netherfield and they marry, as do Darcy and Lizzy. Through the fact that they are able to achieve happiness in the face of these challenges, Jane Austen has shown the strength of their love and their ability to form a lasting relationship.

Examiner's comments

This is a low **grade A** script overall. It is a thoughtful and thorough answer which deals successfully within the time with the two sets of relationships it focuses on. The answer retains clear relevance to the topic. It is strong on using on close reference and evidence from the text to make its points.

Example (c)

The English Teacher: What can we learn from a study of Krishna and Susila's relationship?

Example (d)

The English Teacher: 'Narayan is very successful at involving the reader in his story.'

How far do you agree with this statement?

Example (e)

Of Mice and Men: This book is a study of how power over others can be used, or abused.' By reference to the text, show whether or not you agree with this observation.

An example of a student response to this example is given overleaf.

Student response to Prose – Example (e)

In 'Of Mice and Men', there are indeed many examples of the use of power, and also of its abuse.

'Of Mice and Men' is set in Northern California, on a ranch in Soledad, during the depression. The two main characters are George Milton and Lennie Small, itinerant workers who arrive in Soledad after being forced to flee from their previous jobs in Weed.

A simple example of power being used is found in the way that George exercises his power over Lennie in order to try to keep him out of trouble. For instance, when Curley first meets George and Lennie he tries to assert his authority by picking on Lennie, an obvious target; however because of George's power over Lennie, he has learnt to keep quiet and avoid confrontation. George therefore answers for Lennie and his power over him protects him from the potentially abusive power of Curley.

This danger is shown by the way in which Candy says that Curley hates big guys like Lennie, because he himself is a small man and therefore feels threatened by them and is often 'picking scraps with big guys'. Therefore if George had not used his power over Lennie to keep him quiet and out of trouble, there could have been a fight which would have led to Lennie's losing his job.

Eventually it is only the way in which Slim used his power that prevented Lennie from being sacked when Curley succeeded in picking a fight with Lennie, a fight which led to Lennie's crushing his hand. Slim's power was shown in his words to Curley.

As the son of the boss, Curley feels that he has the power over everyone. This is why he feels able to pick on Lennie with no fear of the consequences: he knows he can get Lennie if he retaliates. But he is clearly intimidated by Slim, as his meek reply demonstrates. There is therefore a kind of chain of power on the ranch.

A simple example where power is abused is the Boss's treatment of the black stable buck with the 'busted back', Crooks. Candy tells us that when George and Lenny are late arriving to work on the ranch, the Boss 'gave the stable buck hell'. Black people had virtually no status then and it was normal to call them 'niggers', so bosses and other white people with power commonly abused this in their treatment of their black workers.

Another person who abuses power over Crooks is Curley's wife, although I believe she does this only because Crooks is the only one she has power over, because she is low down the ladder of power. She does not love Curley, who appears to treat her as if she were one of his possessions - a kind of 'trophy wife'. Also, none of the workers will talk to her as they think she is a 'tart' and 'jail bait'. So when she tries to speak to Candy and Lennie, and Crooks tells her she 'ain't wanted here', she flares up and tells him that she could get him 'strung up'.

In fact, the only character who does not abuse power over other people in this book is Candy. Candy does not seem to have any power over anybody, though, so it is not really up to him. Crooks demonstrates his abuse of power in other ways from purely physical. He seeks to frighten Lennie about the idea that George might leave him. And Carlson abuses his power over Candy to allow him to shoot his old, smelly dog.

However, at the end of the book George uses his own power over Lennie to spare him from Curley and the other workers, after Lennie has accidentally killed Curley's wife. In this final moment of Lennie's life, George uses his power over Lennie in a positive manner, to enable him to feel happy, turn his head and die while thinking happy thoughts, as George shoots him once in the head from behind, to prevent his suffering. This final example of George's use of power may seem negative in one sense, because he actually shoots his old friend when he is dying, but it is a really positive act which shows the deep sympathy between the two characters, even to the end.

Examiner's comments

This script is worth a **grade A**. It takes a very broad view of the way in which power features in the novel, and the examples which are given are handled thoughtfully. There is a sustained and very effective focus on the question, and the ending explores the fact that the line between the use and abuse of power can be a very fine one. To achieve a grade A*, the writing would have needed slightly more depth of treatment of the examples, analysing closely what particular events showed about the nature of relationships between individuals and groups.

Example (f)

Of Mice and Men: The book offers us a range of sad, and sometimes pathetic, characters. How, in your view, does the writer make us feel particularly sympathetic towards any of them?

An example of a student response to this example is given below.

Student response to Prose – Example (f)

I think the writer makes us particularly sympathetic towards Curley's wife. She is a very young, lonely, isolated character, who has no real identity or status and is misunderstood or ill-treated by everyone. She is really trapped in a marriage without love to a man who is not very sympathetic at all.

When first introduced in the novel, she looks like a doll, with hair 'in little rolled clusters.' This gives a picture of someone very young and fragile.

Although she is quite an attractive woman, no one dares to talk to her because they are afraid of Curley. So people never knew what she was like as a person.

'Ever'one of you's scared the rest is goin' to get something on you.' She confronted the men in the bunkhouse because she didn't want them to be scared of her, but should feel free to talk to her.

Another reason for her isolation is that she is the only woman on the ranch. Her husband is not interested in her either and the men on the ranch think she is trouble. This makes her the loneliest character in the novel, and this is another reason why readers feel sympathetic towards her.

Like all the characters, she has a dream too; to be rich, to be a Hollywood star. 'Coulda been in the movies... coulda sat in... big hotels'. After marrying Curley, not only did she lose her identity, but also the dream of becoming someone. Her future was to stay as Curley's wife and spend her time alone in the house. When, near the end of the book, she is killed accidentally by Lennie, her death is as if she has been freed from her misery.

The writer makes us feel sympathetic to most of the characters. Most of them are lonely and all have dreams of wealth or fame. The lack of fulfilment of these dreams is a major theme in the book. In the case of Curley's wife, however, we do feel particular sympathy because she is vulnerable and has not done anything to deserve the other characters' treatment of her. We feel for her in her life and we feel for her sad and pointless death.

Examiner's comments

This is a **grade B** script overall. This is a good response, which looks closely at the circumstances of Curley's wife and draws on relevant evidence from the text. It remains a little general in the comments offered, and a slightly more analytical approach would have helped secure a grade A.

Example (g)

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry: With close reference to the novel, show the different ways in which the theme of prejudice is explored.

Example (h)

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry: Explain the importance of Melvin, R W Simms and TJ in the novel.

Example (i)

Nineteenth Century Short Stories: Some stories have the effect of making the reader feel uncomfortable and even distressed. Choose two stories which aim to do this, and show how the writers achieve these effects.

Example (j)

Nineteenth Century Short Stories: Show how suspense is built up in 'The Adventure of the Speckled Band' and in one other story in the collection.

Paper 2: Poetry

Question 1

The first question (Question 1) asks students to write about a poem which they **have not studied** (an **unprepared poem**), which is printed for them on the paper with the accompanying questions. The question below is taken from the sample assessment materials.

Example (a)

Read the following poem.

Warning

When I am an old woman I shall wear purple
With a red hat which doesn't go, and doesn't suit me.
And I shall spend my pension on brandy and summer gloves
And satin sandals, and say we've no money for butter.
5 I shall sit down on the pavement when I'm tired
And gobble up samples in shops and press alarm bells
And run my stick along the public railings
And make up for the sobriety of my youth.
I shall go out in my slippers in the rain
10 And pick the flowers in other people's gardens
And learn to spit.

You can wear terrible shirts and grow more fat
And eat three pounds of sausages at a go
Or only bread and pickle for a week
15 And hoard pens and pencils and beermats and things in boxes.

But now we must have clothes that keep us dry
And pay our rent and not swear in the street
And set a good example for the children.
We must have friends to dinner and read the papers.

20 But maybe I ought to practise a little now?
So people who know me are not too shocked and surprised
When suddenly I am old, and start to wear purple.

Jenny Joseph

Consider this poem carefully. Write about it as fully as you can. In planning your writing you should consider the following:

- the poet's attitude to her subject
- the poet's descriptive skills
- the language used
- the poem's effect on you
- any other aspects you consider to be of importance.

(30 marks)

There are no student responses as yet, since this is sample material. The mark scheme indicates that, to secure a high grade, the poem must be appreciated in a critical way. Valid comments and observations must be made which are accompanied by evidence of a degree of personal response. It is not sufficient to summarise or paraphrase, nor simply to list literary devices. The key to a successful answer is the interpretation of **the poet's attitude to the subject**: this can be seen as a celebration of independence; a reflection on stereotypical roles people often feel they have to conform to; a defiant and positive response to ageism and a humorous approach to the serious subject of growing old. Students may well appreciate a rebellious streak in the person of the woman, together with a refusal to be bothered by what others may think of her and an unconventional approach to life. The poet's use of language should be analysed closely: this might include such points as the tone of voice she adopts, her use of very graphic images, the way she employs tenses and modes of verbs (shall, can, must, ought) and her use of contrast, including contrasting views, times and colours, for example. In their own response, they may discuss whether they warm to or are repelled by such an unusual approach to life, and why.

Example (b)

The following example of a response to an unprepared poem comes from one of the earlier specifications, and is followed by an actual student response.

Read the following poem.

Incendiary

That one small boy with a face like pallid cheese
And burnt-out little eyes could make a blaze
As brazen, fierce and huge, as red and gold
And zany yellow as the one that spoiled
Three thousand guineas' worth of property
And crops at Godwin's Farm on Saturday
Is frightening – as fact and metaphor:
An ordinary match intended for
The lighting of a pipe or kitchen fire
Misused may set a whole menagerie
Of flame-fanged tigers roaring hungrily.
And frightening, too, that one small boy should set
The sky on fire and choke the stars to heat
Such skinny limbs and such a little heart
Which would have been content with one warm kiss
Had there been anyone to offer this.

Vernon Scannell

Consider this poem carefully. Write about it as fully as you can. In planning your writing you should consider the following:

- the poet's attitude to his subject
- the poet's descriptive skills
- the language used
- the poem's effect on you
- any other aspects you consider to be of importance.

(30 marks)

Student response to Poetry Question 1 – Example (b)

The poem has no definite rhyme scheme and is in a single block of text or stanza. The language used is rather difficult, with a great deal of imagery used to describe the event. It is also clearly modern in style.

The subject matter concerns a boy who started a fire. His attitude towards the subject is that of surprise that one small boy can do so much damage; he observes that there is no one to offer love or comfort to the boy, and reflects on the effect on him. The poem begins with the writer describing the boy's face which is like 'pallid cheese' and 'burnt-out little eyes'. This boy started a fire that destroyed three thousand guineas' worth of property and crops on a farm. He says that it is frightening 'as fact and metaphor' that a match which had been intended as a source of light for a pipe or kitchen fire when misused can release a huge fire. It is also frightening that one small boy should set the sky on fire and choke the stars to heat. And then all this could have been prevented if the boy was loved.

The poet's descriptive skills in this poem are very good. He is able to portray the fire using a variety of imagery. He first describes the fire as 'brazen, fierce and huge as red and gold and zany yellow'. This portrays an image of a huge fire.

He also describes the fire as 'a flame of fanged tigers roaming hungrily'. Here he compares the fire to hungry tigers. This is used to illustrate to us what the fire does. It roams around and devours everything in its path, sending out flames which are compared to hungry tigers. The writer also comments that the fire rose to a great height: 'to set the sky on fire and choke the stars to heat'. This means that the fire reached very elevated places and even, in a metaphorical sense, choked the very stars.

As has been said earlier, the boy is described as having a face 'like pallid cheese with burnt-out eyes'; the description also refers to his skinny limbs and small heart. The description emphasises his small stature - and yet he was capable of starting a fire that destroyed a great amount of property - all because of the lack of love he experienced in his life.

The poem evokes pity through the focus on the small boy, and I feel sorry for him because he ended up causing a great amount of damage, simply because nobody loved him. The other principal emotion that is aroused is one of fear. Fire is always a fearful thing because of the damage it can cause, and the fear is increased by the hatred that accompanies it.

This poem focuses on love, or rather its lack, and on education. The lack of love was linked to his lack of education, and it was this that led to his misusing a matchstick which had such devastating effects, including the destruction of property and crops. If the boy had been loved, all of this could have been prevented.

No matter how small or young a person is, it is important not to underestimate the effect that person can have on events.

Examiner's comments

This answer is worth a **grade C**. It addresses the main themes of the poem in a sound way, and there is relevant use of text to support points. It is, however, an answer which could have been improved considerably by a closer analysis of the language and purpose of the poet's thoughts on the subject. Expression is sound and accurate, with occasional flashes of good, interesting choice of words, but the range of ideas could be developed rather more fully. To secure a higher grade, the analysis needs to be more incisive and the interpretation more fully developed. Although evidence from the poem is used, there are a number of highly pertinent examples of language which are not dealt with: for example, the vivid use of colour surely merits more attention.

Question 2

One question (Question 2) will name at least one poem from Section C of the anthology. Students will be invited to write about that poem and at least one other, which may be named or may be chosen by the student from Section C Anthology. Students are not permitted to take copies of the *Edexcel Anthology for IGCSE English Language (Specification A) and IGCSE English Literature* into the examination with them. All poems from Section C of the anthology will be printed in a poetry booklet as an insert to the examination paper. Copies of the anthology will be available for each Edexcel centre to download at the beginning of the IGCSE course from the Edexcel International website: www.edexcel-international.org.

The question below is taken from the sample assessment materials.

Example (a)

Piano and *Half-past Two* portray two different experiences of childhood. Show how successful each poet has been in presenting an aspect of their childhood and explain which one you consider to be more effective.

(30 marks)

In this example both poems are named and would be included in the poetry booklet.

Example (b)

In the poems *War Photographer* and *Prayer Before Birth*, show how the two poets have expressed a strong personal response to the nature of the society in which they live.

In this example, taken from earlier materials, the student wrote well about two poems from the Anthology, in response to the question. An example of the student response to this example is given below.

Student response to Poetry Question 2 – Example (b)

'War Photographer' and 'Prayer Before Birth' reveal to the reader poets who are fascinated by aspects of society and at the same time are concerned to explore the effects society has on individuals. Both poems are striking in their language and challenging in their subject-matter.

In *War Photographer*, the reader is given a graphic portrait of a man whose profession is war photography. The poem deals with the experiences he encounters when witnessing the cruelty of war, in parallel with his life back at home.

When he is at home, his darkroom is his sanctuary. Disturbed by all the sights of war which he has encountered in the killing fields of Asia, he is brought face to face with the nightmare scenes he has witnessed as they emerge on the film, trapped in eternity. He thinks of the mourning woman whose permission 'he sought without words to do what someone must' in order to take her dead husband's picture, to bring this image of war's horror back home.

As he travels from one realm to the other, from the everyday society in which he is living, with its ignorance and apathy, to the warfields where people suffer and die pointlessly, he is deeply saddened: he starts to hate his work and those, like him, who make a living out of recording the misery of others.

That man is the tragic image of our reality. All human values are lost. Wars are fought over wealth, hatred and greed; innocent people die and suffer over causes that have no value. He faces it, he lives it. He takes these moments of despair - 'A hundred agonies in black-and-white' and captures them for ever in his film and heart, only so that an 'editor will pick out five or six/ for Sunday's supplement'. The typical man will look at them and shed a hypocritical tear 'between the bath and pre-lunch beers', thinking he understands and sympathises. Society lives careless of what happens in other parts of the world to people just like us. The war photographer, however, lives both kinds of reality - the mundane life at home in what Duffy describes as 'Rural England', a place where 'fields don't explode beneath the feet of running children', and the remote, war-torn existence he records. The tension of these two worlds eats him up inside. He gives a picture of how we go on living, careless with our lives, while others suffer for futile reasons and excuses and ends the poem with the strong comment 'they do not care'.

In *Prayer Before Birth* the poet presents us with a yet to be born child who despises humanity and prays for death. The child's words, from the outset, vividly present a picture of a society of demons and horrors: 'the bloodsucking bat... club-footed ghoul'. The effect is reinforced by assonance and harsh alliteration: 'bat', 'rat', 'bloodsucking bat'. Such striking sound effects recur throughout the poem; the unborn child fears that humanity may 'with tall walls wall me'. At times, the horror is softened by softer reflections on what life might be, especially in the third stanza, where the harshness of the opening stanzas is replaced by a gentle view of nature and 'a white light ...to guide me'. However, this tranquil mood does not last, and the inhumanity of humanity rapidly returns to haunt the unborn child, with fears of death and depersonalisation. He fears society will turn him into 'a lethal automaton or a 'cog'.

The images are especially tragic because of the fact that we think of newborn children as innocent, so a child not even born yet ought to be even more free from cares: it has no knowledge or understanding of the world or life, but despite this prays not to have anything to do with it. 'Let them not make me a stone and let them not spill me/Otherwise kill me.' The poem takes the form and style of a prayer in its use of an initial repeated phrase, rather like the responses used in many prayers. The fact that the unborn child prays to a god whom we, with our experience of life, can barely comprehend, makes it even more chilling. To find such despair on the lips of someone who has not lived highlights emphatically the deep flaws in society which MacNeice feels. The human race, he shows, is one of sin and cruelty, and the pure words of a soul not yet delivered into this world tell the truth with a frightening and disturbing honesty.

The two poems are profoundly unsettling in their imagery. They set out to present a strong contrast between a peaceful and simple society and one which is full of horrors: MacNeice's ghouls are matched by Duffy's 'half-formed ghost'. Both paint dark scenes where life becomes unbearable. Death is never far from the surface, and the settings with their religious imagery and intense feelings highlight the fears of what society is becoming.

Examiner's comments

This is a clear **grade A** answer, because of the quality of the interpretation and insight. The student has seen into the poems in a convincing way and made some very apt comparisons, linking them together effectively. It could still have been improved, however, and although quotations are used in a number of places to good effect, there is some of the writing where the comments seem rather too general because the examples are not given. With a few more telling quotations, this could well have been a grade A* response.

Question 3

This, the alternative poetry question, allows students to select appropriate poems from the anthology for their answer. Students will not have their own copy of the anthology with them in the examination, however all the poems will be printed in a poetry booklet in addition to the examination paper.

The question below is taken from the sample assessment materials.

Example (a)

Choose two poems from the poetry anthology which you would select as particularly interesting. With close reference to the poems explain the reasons for your choice. In your answer you may like to include some or all of the following:

- the subject of each poem
- the way the poets use language
- the poems' effects on you.

Students may choose any poems from the anthology in their answer. There is no reason why they should not refer to the poem or poems which have been named in Question 2. For example, the answer which is given above for Question 2 might, with comparatively slight changes, be a reasonable model for the approach to this question also.

Using the mark scheme

The mark scheme gives the responses we expect from students. Indicative answers are given but during the standardisation of examiners process the mark scheme is updated and expanded to cover unexpected, correct student responses.

Section C: Planning and teaching

Course planner

How long should the course take?

Although the course is designed to be taught over two years, or five terms, it is possible to prepare students adequately over one year. This will depend on the students' prior experience of literature, and the amount of curriculum time devoted to English Literature on the timetable. If the students are used to the serious study of literature and have come across basic literary terms, then they should cope with a prose text, a play and a collection of 15 poems in one year. Since there are two examination sessions per year, there is flexibility about the length of the course. It would, for example, be possible to start teaching the course in September and to enter students for the examination in the November of the following year.

However, running the course over two years allows for more background work about literary study in general, and for more examination practice the set texts

An example of course planning

The following table shows a possible five-term course, with some suggestions of texts and approaches that might be adopted at particular times. This could be adapted to a shorter timescale if required. This is in no sense intended to be prescriptive. There then follows a blank planning sheet, on which teachers could devise their own course plans.

Term 1 of 5

Term	Focus/topic	Outcome
Term 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The short story as a genre	<p>Use one short story to illustrate some basic literary terms: plot, character, viewpoint, mood/atmosphere and style.</p> <p>Students discuss or write about these terms in relation to another short story.</p> <p>(Short stories from any suitable anthology can be used for this exercise. For example, <i>Old Man at the Bridge</i> by Ernest Hemingway works well as an example of writer's techniques.)</p> <p>Students should practise the techniques they have found in their reading of short stories in their own creative writing. They could write freely on a choice of titles provided by the teacher.</p>

Term 2 of 5

Term	Focus/topic	Outcome
Term 2 (first half)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prose text: <i>Nineteenth Century Short Stories</i> (from Section B, Prose) 	Once students have gained an understanding of the potential and craft of short stories as a genre, they can begin to study the stories in the set text.
(second half)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drama text: <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (from Section A, Drama) 	<p>Background: the historical setting and events.</p> <p>If possible, use a video version of the play, or live performance, to give students an appreciation of character and plot before a detailed reading of the script.</p> <p>Shakespeare's language: a study of one speech from near the beginning of the play, illustrating features of language such as archaic words; using a glossary; blank verse.</p>

Term 3 of 5

Term	Focus/topic	Outcome
Term 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drama text (continued) <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (from Section A, Drama) 	<p>A scene by scene reading of the play, supplemented by viewing of video/live performances.</p> <p><i>Other possible activities:</i></p> <p>Class discussion: How are the central characters affected by fate?</p> <p>Students in small groups discuss the words and actions of the main characters, and report back to the class. These discussions become the basis for character notes.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> End of year examination 	An interim examination on the two set texts studied so far. Questions devised by the teacher, but based on the style of questions in the sample assessment materials.

Term 4 of 5

Term	Focus/topic	Outcome
Term 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Poetry Anthology (coursework if applicable) <p><i>Edexcel Anthology for IGCSE English Language (Specification A) and IGCSE English Literature</i></p> <p>(Section C of anthology)</p>	<p>Use some poems to illustrate poetic techniques such as imagery, tone, style, verse form. These might include some unprepared poems (to provide preparation for this possible option) and also poems with similar themes to those in the anthology.</p> <p>In groups, students discuss a given poem from the anthology, then present their views on that poem to the whole class.</p> <p>Connections and links found between the poems. Students might, for example, construct a grid that links poems together thematically and gives some key examples from the text.</p> <p>Coursework completed (if applicable)</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mock examination 	<p>Use the published sample assessment materials, including the mark schemes.</p>

Term 5 of 5

Term	Focus/topic	Outcome
Term 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cover any remaining subject content Final revision Practice questions 	n/a

Blank planning sheet

Class..... Teacher.....

Texts chosen:

Paper 1

Section A, Drama:.....

Section B, Prose:

Paper 2

Poetry (include a 'plot' of which poems would be covered when and how, for example pairs or groups of poems)

.....

Term	Focus/topic	Outcome
Term 1		
Term 2		

Term	Focus/topic	Outcome
Term 3		
Term 4		
Term 5		

Teaching ideas

This section contains a part on Coursework and a part on the Drama and Prose set texts and Poems in Section C of the anthology.

Coursework

This should be read in conjunction with pages 6–10 of the IGCSE English Literature (4ET0) specification.

The requirements in brief

The assignment must enable students to respond critically and sensitively to **at least six poems**, (at least three poems in depth from Section C of the *Edexcel Anthology for IGCSE English Language (Specification A) and IGCSE English Literature* **plus** an additional three other poems) and to show understanding of how meanings and ideas are conveyed through language, structure and form. The assignment should allow students to make connections and comparisons between poems, referring to details to support their views.

There is no prescribed word length for the coursework assignment. Typically the assignment may be between 1000 and 1500 words, but there are no penalties for exceeding this guidance.

Each piece of coursework should contain the student's name, the date on which the work was completed, the mark awarded and a brief teacher comment justifying the mark. This comment should be based on the assessment criteria for the mark range awarded. The Assessment Criteria for the coursework can be found on pages 9-10 of the IGCSE English Literature (4ET0) specification.

Coursework assignments may be handwritten or word-processed.

Teachers may advise students in the production of coursework, but should **not** proofread early drafts or correct every technical error. Teachers may suggest improvements to the content of the coursework, but it is the student's responsibility to make any corrections. There is no limit to the number of coursework pieces a student may produce from which to select the best piece for final assessment, nor to the number of drafts a student may write. However, teachers should be mindful of the overall weighting of written coursework (30%) and make sure that the coursework paper does not take up an inordinate amount of curriculum time.

Setting coursework assignments

One possible approach to setting the coursework assignment is for the assignment to link the poems by theme.

Examples

- Poems with a narrative element (*Half-past Two, La Belle Dame Sans Merci, My Last Duchess*)
- Poems which explore relationships (*Shakespeare's Sonnet 116, A Mother in a Refugee Camp, Remember*)
- Poems on the theme of memories (*Piano, Hide and Seek, Once Upon a Time*)

It is possible to have different groups of students working on different themes/groups/pairs of poems. The above are suggestions only – other topics will lend themselves to similar treatment: for example loss, rejection, death, childhood, time, prejudice.

Managing coursework assignments

There are various ways of managing coursework in the classroom. The assignment could be set by the teacher for the whole class, in which case the students would all study the chosen poems together. If the teacher wishes to give the students some say in the assignment, the teacher could set a choice of titles from which the students would choose one. A third approach is for the students themselves to choose the poems they wish to write about and, with the teacher's guidance, come up with a coursework title. This approach will work with more able and confident students, who can work independently.

Although students need to write about only three poems from the anthology, they should study them all beforehand. This will allow the teacher to see how students respond to the poems, and which ones generate interest and enthusiasm. It will also help them when looking at three further poems to include in their assignment.

The best coursework is produced from a title which provides a clear focus for the essay. A title such as *'Write about three poems which you have enjoyed'* is too vague. The result would be three separate essays, with no attempt to make connections between the poems. Titles which specifically ask for comparison, or the justification of an opinion, are more likely to bring out the best from your students. For example: *'Compare three poems which explore emotions. Which poem do you find the most moving?'* requires personal response from the student. Teachers must note that the assignment must also make reference to at least three further poems – which may be drawn from outside of the anthology.

Coursework carries a high weighting of 30%, so the essay should be substantial and detailed. Students are expected to show some knowledge of technical terms, but they should be discouraged from 'feature spotting' for its own sake. There is little reward in simply pointing out that 'This is a simile' or 'Here is an example of alliteration'; students need to explain the effect of such language use, to gain high marks.

Drama and prose set texts

The following pages give notes on four of the set texts.

Two of the drama texts and two of the prose texts are explored in some detail, to illustrate the kinds of topics on which teachers may wish to focus when presenting these to their students. There is background information on each text, and some ideas on such features as theme and language. While the following section does not deal comprehensively with every one of the texts to be studied, the examples included are intended to give a number of approaches that can be adopted as appropriate with all of the other prescribed texts.

These notes represent some teachers' views on the texts. They are provided only to stimulate ideas for teachers; they are not intended to be handed out to students as revision notes. They will not inform the setting of questions or mark schemes.

Teaching the drama texts

Arthur Miller: A View from the Bridge

Context

In 1947, whilst researching the disappearance of a longshoreman (a worker who loads and unloads ships) who worked on the waterfront at Red Hook, Brooklyn, Miller was told the story of another longshoreman who informed the Immigration Bureau about two of his own relatives, to prevent one of them marrying his niece. *A View from the Bridge* is therefore based on a true story. Miller wrote two versions of the play, a one-act version in 1955, followed by a reworked two-act version which was first performed a year later. The playwright himself worked for almost two years in the Brooklyn navy yards and therefore experienced first-hand the quotidian lives of the Italian workers and their struggle to compete for jobs every day, always at the mercy of the hiring boss. He recognised this system as both humiliating and open to corruption, as if the usual regulations of American society did not apply there. The title of the play therefore implies a cosy, middle-class America is observing events from a privileged and distanced location, viewing the practices of an unfamiliar world.

Plot summary

The arrival of Beatrice's two Italian cousins (illegal immigrants) causes problems in the Carbone household. Eddie is unhappy with the developing relationship between his seventeen-year-old niece Catherine and Rodolpho, the youngest cousin. Eddie grows to dislike Rodolpho for several reasons, mainly because in his view he acts in an effeminate manner, and therefore hints at his possible homosexual inclinations. Despite earlier registering his disgust at the story of a man who 'snitched' on his own uncle to the Immigration authorities, Eddie nevertheless informs them about his two relatives, who are later picked up, along with two other recently arrived immigrants. Beatrice and Catherine are convinced of Eddie's guilt. Marco, the eldest cousin, also accuses him and spits in Eddie's face during his arrest. But Eddie's denunciation has been in vain, since Catherine's marriage can still go ahead, and Rodolpho's resulting American citizenship will ensure he remains there. Marco, however, must return to Italy. Whilst on bail, Marco seeks revenge and stabs Eddie with Eddie's own knife.

Some themes

- **Fate:** Alfieri communicates the inevitable outcome, as we are warned of Eddie's destiny from the start and reminded of it during the play: 'powerless as I ... run its bloody course'.
- **Jealousy:** Eddie's over-protectiveness towards Catherine appears to exceed the natural concerns of an uncle. His frequent derogatory labeling of Rodolpho as 'that' so as to avoid using his name 'That's gonna be her husband?' attempts to undermine his status as a rival. Eddie's complaint to Catherine is redolent of a resentful lover 'I don't see you no more' and his 'reasons' for Rodolpho's unsuitability as a potential husband are mostly unsound. Alfieri hits a raw nerve when he tells Eddie 'She can't marry you, can she?' as Eddie's response is one of anger '[furiously]. What the hell you're talkin' about!'
- **Homosexuality:** Eddie fails to articulate adequately what it is he dislikes about Rodolpho. It is clear he is hinting at homosexuality — 'gives me the heeby-jeebies... weird... wacky hair... chorus girl' - using himself and Marco as his benchmarks since he believes the latter is 'like a man'. In the lawyer's office Alfieri, who like us remains unconvinced by Eddie's logic, elucidates that American law cannot prevent their relationship. Alfieri is perceptive, also suspecting 'there is too much love for the niece' and attempts to warn Eddie about it. In a scene which parallels that of Beatrice giving advice to Catherine, Alfieri twice counsels Eddie to 'Let her go'.

- **Masculinity:** Different versions are offered by the three main male characters, each of which is valid, despite Eddie's attempts, concerning Rodolpho, to insinuate otherwise.
- **Differing Views of Law:** Alfieri represents the criminal law of America, which Eddie mostly subscribes to, whilst Marco's law is based on family loyalty, believing that justice is in the hands of man, not God. Yet Eddie goes against the Italian code of honour by denouncing the cousins, then conveniently tries to take the law into his own hands in the last scene.

Playwright's craft/dramatic conventions

- **Use of a Narrator:** Alfieri's role is two-fold, since he also enters into the drama. He tries to remain objective, portraying Eddie in a positive light 'He was as good a man as he had to be in a life that was hard and even'.
- **Language:** Eddie's family speaks mostly colloquially, using grammatically incorrect phrases which are frequently abbreviated – this adds a realistic texture to the play. Notice Eddie employs biblical references at the moment of Marco's challenge, as if to elevate and purify his position. Eddie's barrage of questions concerning Catherine's job is reflective of his need for authority and his pessimistic outlook, such as his prediction her new job will lead to her moving out and seldom visiting. This is coupled with negative language 'no... not... never... nowhere's'. Although as a lawyer Alfieri's language is more refined, it does not alienate Eddie during their scenes.
- **Euphemism:** such as Beatrice's 'When am I gonna be a wife again', in reference to her lack of intercourse with Eddie.
- **Song Lyrics:** the words of Paper Doll are pertinent to Eddie's relationship with Catherine 'tough to love a doll that's not your own'.
- **Irony:** Eddie's advice to Catherine is unconsciously ironic 'you can quicker get back a million dollars that was stole than a word that you gave away'. Likewise, Eddie's denunciation achieves nothing; not only has he failed to prevent the wedding, but also he has lost Catherine's love and respect – which we suspect he values above all else.
- **Structure/Form:** Alfieri plays a major role in furthering the action and offers ideas on how the audience should receive it. Events are cleverly linked in both acts, each of which is carefully structured, despite the lack of scene divisions, with parallels evident. Miller manipulates pace for optimum effect, for example, after the officers arrest the immigrants, the pace quickens as other characters quickly exit as a sign of Eddie's guilt and subsequent ostracism. Dramatic tension is heightened at the end during the fight scene, emphasised by Marco's drawn out insult 'Anima-a-a-!' and an abundance of exclamation marks.
- **Setting:** Most of the action takes place in the Carbone's apartment where the outside world is brought in via their conversations. This intensifies and heightens the drama, especially since it represents Eddie's domain.
- **Symbols:** Such as Catherine's 'new high heels' with their onomatopoeic 'clack, clack, clack' which in Eddie's mind represents a version of femininity he tries to protect her from.

Oscar Wilde: The Importance of Being Earnest

Context

By the close of Queen Victoria's reign (she lived from 1819 to 1901 and reigned from 1837 to her death), the British Empire had reached its highest point. The English aristocracy prospered, widening the gap between the rich and the poor. Published in 1895, Wilde's comic play satirised and parodied the upper echelons of society (to which he too belonged), by criticising their false values, shallow interests and superficial lifestyles. Wilde's own stated philosophy for his play '*we should treat all the trivial things of life seriously, and all the serious things of life with sincere and studied triviality*' is reflected in the petty concerns of his characters.

Plot summary

Jack Worthing, known as Ernest when in town, has arrived there to propose to Gwendolen and visits Algernon Moncrieff (her cousin). Early on we are aware of a mystery surrounding his birth, since he was found in a handbag at Victoria Station. Lady Bracknell (Gwendolen's mother) snobbishly refuses the attachment. Meanwhile Algernon, now aware of the existence of Jack's eighteen-year-old ward called Cecily, discovers his address in the country and plots to see her. As the scene shifts to the country, Miss Prism (Cecily's tutor) advances the action by confessing she once wrote a novel. Algernon arrives, declaring himself Jack's younger brother Ernest (who is actually fictitious). Jack then also appears, dressed in mourning suit, announcing the death of his brother Ernest! Much to his chagrin, he finds him alive and well and thus orders him to leave. Algernon ignores this request and proposes to Cecily. When Gwendolen enters, she and Cecily mistakenly believe they are both engaged to the same man – named Ernest. Jack is therefore forced to admit the truth. The women forgive them – but each still insists on marrying a man named Ernest. Lady Bracknell's arrival is to prevent her daughter from marrying Jack. Yet the disclosure of his true birth origins (revealed via Miss Prism who confesses to having mistakenly left him at the station instead of her novel), leads to a happy ending for all, since he is in fact Algernon's older brother, named Ernest.

Some themes

- **Superficiality/Criticism of Marriage:** Algernon satirises the traditionally sacred state of wedlock, calling it 'business' rather than 'pleasure', and therefore hints at the aristocratic tendency to treat it as a commercial transaction. This view is reinforced by Lady Bracknell who tells her daughter 'I ... will inform you of the fact' if she becomes engaged. Cecily's statement that 'a really serious engagement' should be 'broken off at least once' ridicules and undermines the importance of marriage. Even happiness within matrimony is mocked, since the fact that Mary Farquhar 'always flirts with her own husband' is described as 'scandalous'.
- **Absurdity and Shallowness of Manners:** Algernon's belief that 'it is customary in good society to take some slight refreshment at five o'clock' demonstrates an adherence to insignificant routines. Wilde pokes fun at the overstated insincerity with which people become attached to each other without prior knowledge via Cecily and Gwendolen's polite exchanges 'I like you already more than I can say'.
- **Triviality of Concerns of Upper Classes:** Jack's missing cigarette case has led him to write 'frantic letters to Scotland Yard', which is ironic, since it depicts the aristocracy as believing the police exist exclusively for their own minor problems. Jack's notion of self-importance is inherent in his words.
- **Critique of the Values of the Day:** Wilde mocks Literature (especially French and English), general society, universities and religious traditions, such as christenings.

- **‘Bunburyism’:** Adopting another identity, being mistaken or deceiving others, is central to the plot.
- **Ignorance of people in High-Society:** Gwendolen’s ‘I had no idea there were any flowers in the country’ ridicules the upper-class mentality.

Playwright’s craft/dramatic conventions

- **Setting/Stage Directions:** Setting is typically elegant, for example ‘Half-Moon Street’ is in Mayfair (London’s most fashionable area) and ‘the Manor House’, the backdrop for the remaining acts, suggests affluence. This upper-class environment is reinforced by the stage directions ‘Morning-room...luxuriously and artistically furnished’.
- **Humour:** Both verbal and visual humour permeate the play. At times the humour is farcical, as in Jack’s melodramatic ‘Yes ... mother!’, or Algernon’s theatrical ‘horror’ at the absence of cucumber sandwiches. Jack’s entrance in Act 2 ‘dressed in the deepest mourning’ is visibly amusing and heightens the audience’s enjoyment since we anticipate a conflict between Jack and Algernon. The blowing of kisses between Jack and Gwendolen behind her mother’s back represents a comic triumph since this romantic and spontaneous exchange is in contrast with Lady Bracknell’s controlling and unsentimental manner. Characters’ movements also provide a source of hilarity, such as when Jack almost chases Algernon over the sofa in a bid to retrieve his cigarette case.
- **Irony:** Ironic quips surround the issue of identity, for example Algernon tells Jack ‘I’ll keep this as a proof that your name is Ernest if ever ...’ Cecily’s diary is a great source of irony, as she has been engaged to Algernon three months prior to their meeting. Algernon magnifies this absurdity as he enters into her fantasy and discusses it as if it is reality.
- **Language:** The play is enriched by verbal witticisms, which are carefully woven within each scene.
- **Pun:** The play’s title advocates sincerity, yet instances of flippancy abound.
- **Word Play/Reversal of Clichés:** Wilde frequently overturns the usual and expected to mock accepted norms, for example Algernon’s ‘washing one’s clean linen in public’ or Lady Bracknell’s ‘she looks quite twenty years younger’. The language of the working classes is also parodied, as Lane refers to his marriage as ‘a misunderstanding’ rather than an understanding.
- **Biblical Phrases:** These are usually associated with Miss Prism, hinting at her puritanical side: ‘As a man sows so let him reap’, which is in contrast with her enjoyment of flirting with Dr Chasuble.
- **Euphemism:** Miss Prism talks of ‘intellectual pleasures’ when referring to education (here German grammar) to encourage Cecily to learn.
- **Paradox:** Jack’s ‘passionate celibacy’ hints at an inability to remain chaste in a world full of temptation.
- **Structure:** Dramatic tension builds throughout the play. Act 1 builds Cecily’s character, with our expectation magnified by Algernon’s eavesdropping, who (true to the traits of farce) ‘reads his shirt-cuff, and smiles’, hinting at his next move. Fluency of plot is then maintained since she is introduced immediately in the next act. Wilde’s sense of timing and pace works well, as events can move speedily from one to another. The dénouement in the final act, despite Lady Bracknell’s assurance that it will be received negatively, is of course ironically welcome, since Jack really is called ‘Ernest’.
- **Parallel Structure:** Wilde’s verbal pairing of the couples underlines the insincerity of their words and therefore perhaps emptiness of their thoughts and feelings, as one character’s phrases can be easily substituted for another. Pairing Cecily with Gwendolen, and Algernon with Jack, they speak almost identical lines at times, which become more frequent and closer together as the drama and tension increase. Indeed, the two females actually act as a chorus at one point, speaking one line together.

Approaches to teaching the prose texts

Jane Austen: *Pride and Prejudice*

Context

Although written at a time of great upheaval in world affairs, the focus in Jane Austen's (1775-1817) novel is social, not military. Despite Great Britain's continuous military action in Europe (the Napoleonic wars), Ireland (Irish Rebellion) and India (Mahratta wars) during the author's lifetime, she chooses instead to highlight 'three or four families in a country village' as she advised her niece Anna, who aspired to be a novelist. Military activity is therefore a backdrop to her novel, as any spotlight on the regiment is in terms of its effects on Meryton's social life, such as the dancing partners it provides for the Bennet sisters. The society that Austen depicts is one of strict class divisions, defined by family connections and wealth. Since female advancement was chiefly via marriage, the pursuit of a husband is seen as a major occupation, particularly for the mother of a large family of daughters like Mrs Bennet. Throughout the novel, Austen wittily mocks the conduct of the middle and upper classes, constantly lacing her observations with humour, sarcasm and irony.

Plot summary

The arrival of a rich, upper-class male tenant at Netherfield Park causes great excitement in the Meryton neighbourhood and is particularly good news for Mrs Bennet who immediately begins planning Jane's (her eldest daughter) introduction to Mr Bingley, with a view to securing her marriage. At the next ball, Jane does indeed dance with Mr Bingley, whilst her sister Elizabeth is slighted by his friend, Mr Darcy, who is generally regarded to be a proud and arrogant man. The attachment Jane forms with Mr Bingley is deliberately broken by Darcy, which he later reveals was motivated by his desire to protect his friend from an unsuitable match (largely because of Jane's middle-class roots and family 'defects'). Elizabeth's growing prejudice towards Darcy is further fuelled by his supposed misconduct towards Mr Wickham. Darcy, however, overcomes his earlier prejudice towards Elizabeth to the extent that he proposes to her – albeit in an unromantic manner. Her refusal and explanation for her reasons prompts him to re-evaluate his general behaviour. His letter to Elizabeth explaining his recent conduct concerning her sister Jane and Mr Wickham sets in motion her own transformation of feelings towards him, particularly when she learns he arranged her younger sister Lydia's marriage to Mr Wickham after their elopement brought shame on their family. The novel therefore witnesses Elizabeth and Darcy stripped of their pride and prejudice to form a happy marriage, matched by the nuptials of Jane and Mr Bingley.

Some themes

- **Views on Marriage:** Austen contrasts those marriages that are based on financial gain with those based on love, trust, friendship and understanding (like Elizabeth and Darcy). The author uses Charlotte Lucas to voice her sceptical views on matrimony ‘Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance’. For Charlotte, marriage is a necessity and therefore she cannot afford to be choosy. Financial insecurity for females was often the result of a lack of male heirs in their direct family, since tradition dictated the path of inheritance. Likewise, men like Wickham who lack their own fortune are equally unscrupulous in courting women with money to advance and secure their own position. Wedlock is also seen as a competition, as Mr Bennet teasingly adds ‘if *we* do not venture, somebody else will’. Mr Collins epitomises the fickle male suitor. The author takes great delight in mocking the shallow way in which his choice of a wife is decided at the same speed as a mundane, domestic chore, since he ‘had only to change from Jane to Elizabeth – and it was soon done – done while Mrs Bennet was stirring the fire’.
- **Love:** At times cynically portrayed, relationships stemming from love are rare in the novel, suggesting that true love can only be achieved once society’s superficial expectations of marriage are surpassed and difficult circumstances are overcome. Not only must Elizabeth and Darcy master their pride and prejudice, they must also rise above several obstacles, such as Lady Catherine’s interference.
- **Pride and Prejudice:** Whilst Elizabeth and Darcy are guilty of both, several other characters also display these characteristics, such as Bingley’s sisters and Lady Catherine.
- **Expectations of Behaviour:** Both genders are presumed to live according to a strict code of conduct. Mrs Bennet fears that Mr Bingley might be an unsuitable tenant, since his constant departures means he will ‘never be settled at Netherfield as he ought to be’. Mr Darcy gives offence at the ball as he dances only twice. Elizabeth’s decision to walk three miles in the rain, alone and on foot, exposes her to disapproval from both her own mother and Mrs Hurst and Miss Bingley, who find it ‘incredible’ that a woman should behave in such a way. All three criticise her resulting appearance. Lydia’s elopement with Wickham understandably brings disgrace on her family and her actions unfairly threaten the fate of her other sisters, since they are all publicly tarnished by her selfish and thoughtless act.
- **Class:** Divisions existed *within* classes, as well as *across* them. Members of the ‘true’ upper classes acquired their wealth via land, title or inheritance. Those whose fortunes had been made by other means, such as trade, were viewed as inferior, such as the Bingleys, as snobbery was rife. Mrs Hurst highlights Jane’s ‘low connections’ and Austen reminds us of Darcy’s position concerning Elizabeth ‘were it not for the inferiority of her connections, he should be in some danger’. The author satirises the condescending and patronising attitude of Lady Catherine De Bourgh, who is shocked by the Bennet girls’ upbringing and news that all five daughters are ‘out [in society] before the elder are married!’, because it does not adhere to her strict interpretation of social convention. Indeed, Lady Catherine is so superior and full of self-importance that she is even credited with predicting the following day’s weather!
- **Insincerity:** Content to openly criticise the Bennet family amongst themselves, Mrs Hurst and Miss Bingley nevertheless feign ‘a renewal of tenderness’ towards Jane in public. Mr Collins’s blatant lie that he chose Elizabeth as his wife as soon as he saw her emphasises his hollow nature.

- **Social Conventions:** Strict rules and regulations govern society. Unless Mr Bennet makes the first introduction to Mr Bingley, his daughters could not possibly entertain the idea of visiting their new neighbour. Once the Netherfield ladies have visited the Bennets, the favour must be returned. Miss Bingley has to be prompted by her brother to ‘say what the occasion required’ during Mrs Bennet’s visit to Jane’s ‘sick bed’, as Austen hints at the false, theatrical nature of such civilities ‘She performed her part ...’. Protocol must be followed during balls, as tradition dictates only a married woman may chaperone unmarried women.

Author’s craft

- **Light-hearted Tone:** Austen often employs humour or sarcasm to mock her characters, such as Mr Bennet’s display of dry wit towards his wife when discussing her nerves ‘They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these twenty years at least’. She makes fun of society’s preoccupation with insignificant detail, such as the Bennet girls’ ‘fortunate’ discovery that Mr Bingley ‘wore a blue coat and rode a black horse’.
- **Plot:** The use of journeys in the novel advances the plot and serves as a catalyst for change. Elizabeth’s journeys allow Austen to present her with Darcy, and we witness the dramatic alteration in her feelings for him by comparing these two isolated encounters.
- **Setting:** The author presents a microcosm of society, only venturing infrequently into other counties. The majority of the action takes place inside, reflecting the private concerns of the characters. Pemberley, however, is described in great detail, with some of its qualities reminiscent of its owner Mr Darcy since they are repeatedly described as ‘handsome’.
- **Irony:** Austen pokes fun at the society in which she lived, as exemplified by the supposed ‘truth universally acknowledged’ of her opening line.
- **Language:**
 - Darcy’s initial romantic interest in Elizabeth is depicted in a comically tongue-in-cheek fashion using the vocabulary of imprisonment, as his discoveries are described as ‘mortifying’ and he is ‘**forced** to acknowledge’ some of her attractive qualities, feeling ‘**caught**’.
 - The abundance of dialogue in the novel allows us to experience the diversity of characters and their speech mannerisms, such as Mrs Bennet’s tendency to overdramatise, Mary’s dry, logical explanations devoid of feeling and Lady Catherine’s haughty, superior air.
- **Narrative Viewpoint:** Elizabeth’s previously unbiased view of Darcy has been clouded and misguided by Wickham, as she is too quick to believe him, and thus lacks our objectivity. Austen provides us with subtle hints that Darcy is not as arrogant or proud as our heroine presumes. He avoids joining in with Mrs Hurst and Miss Bingley to criticise Elizabeth and is later sensitive to the rude manner in which they exclude and isolate her during a walk, actively suggesting they take another route to allow all four to continue together. The inclusion of letters in the first person narrative widens the narrative voice and deepens our understanding of certain characters. Darcy’s lengthy letter allows us a first-hand, honest insight into his character, which, whilst confirming some of Elizabeth’s accusations, also contrasts with them.

R. K. Narayan: The English Teacher

Context

By Narayan's own admission, his novel is highly autobiographical in content. His own personal tragedy occurred in 1939, when his wife Rajam died from typhoid just five years after they were married. Like Krishna, he chose to bring up their only child, Hema, alone and also attempted to contact his wife spiritually. The author chooses to set his novel in the fictional southern Indian town of Malgudi, and published it in 1945. It would be a further two years until India gained independence from its colonial ruler, Great Britain.

Plot summary

After a ten-year period of living in a hostel whilst working as an English teacher in a college (and previously as a student there himself), Krishna feels increasingly dissatisfied with the routine of his daily life and the mundane manner in which his subject is taught. The arrival of his wife Susila and seven-month-old daughter Leela inject new life into his monotonous and mechanical existence, leading him to rent a house and live in domesticity with them, surprising himself by the enjoyment he gains from this new experience. Whilst house hunting with Susila, she inadvertently steps into an insanitary 'toilet' and soon falls ill. Sick with typhoid, she dies, leaving Krishna to bring up Leela, which he chooses to do alone, despite offers of help from his relatives. His psychic contact with Susila via a medium temporarily serves to lift him from his loneliness and depression and initiates a new way of viewing the world, aided by his friendship with the headmaster of a local infants' school. After becoming increasingly discontent with his career, he resigns from his position in order to work with the headmaster. Shortly after, he achieves his first independent psychic communication with Susila, since his self-imposed release from the shackles of his everyday life has led to a previously unobtainable level of spiritual receptiveness.

Some themes

- **Purity of Childhood versus 'Curse of Adulthood':** The headmaster believes that we have a great deal to learn from children and reveres their innocent state to the extent that he appears to find it difficult to function in adult company. He holds a low opinion of the adult world: 'Helpless fools ...'.
- **Western Education:** Krishna relates the mundane way in which English is taught 'admonishing, cajoling and browbeating ... mug up Shakespeare ... secure high marks' lacking creativity, with the goal of merely passing exams. Even the poem he produces for Susila is plagiarised. After his wife's death, the futility of his job only increases. Likewise, the headmaster feels that schools 'put blinkers on to us'.
- **The Spiritual World:** Krishna's psychic communication with Susila transforms his mood 'I felt as if a dead load had been lifted' and comforts him. The headmaster accepts his astrologer's predictions of his death date – which happens metaphorically rather than physically, since he is in fact 'reborn' after the date passes to live a life of his choosing, rather than one of obligation.

- **Predictability versus Unpredictability:** Krishna's transition from a life of certainty to one of spontaneity is initiated not only by the arrival of his family, but by Susila getting rid of his old alarm clock. Even though the clock is unreliable and when it goes off unexpectedly he always stifles its cries with a book, it nevertheless represents a part of his former life; one filled with the familiar, the routine, the habitual. It is unsurprising therefore that her actions cause conflict between them, as she has unwittingly removed a symbol of the predictability and comfort of his previous lifestyle. Susila at times adds an unrestrained and impulsive air, such as when she 'pleaded recklessly' to walk along the river before viewing the new house. Despite his reservations, Krishna actually finds himself enjoying this unpremeditated decision 'a most exhilarating walk'. Unfortunately it is Susila's unpredictable venture into the unsanitary lavatory that causes her illness.
- **Eastern Culture versus Western Culture:** Narayan mocks the trivial concerns of colonial settlers, such as Mr Brown who feels 'shock' that a student had misspelt 'honours' by omitting the 'u' (ironically the student might have been using the American spelling, highlighting even further Mr Brown's narrow-minded view that the 'British' way is the only acceptable one). Krishna's sarcasm feels justified when he notes that during his thirty years in India, he doubts Mr Brown can say one phrase correctly in any of the two hundred Indian dialects – highlighting his boss's superior air and cultural ignorance. The arrival of the *Swamiji* (Holy Man) and his subsequent rituals (invited by Susila's mother to rid her daughter of the 'Evil Eye') make Krishna feel 'ashamed' enough to apologise to the doctor (who practises western medicine), since he does not appear to hold his culture's traditional beliefs in high regard. Ironically, he later totally immerses himself in them via meditation, since it brings him not only closer to Susila, but inner peace.
- **Indian Traditions:** Rituals and customs are important to the characters, such as Krishna's mother using vermilion at the entrance to their house to welcome her daughter-in-law. Susila twice has a vermilion dot (*bindi*) applied to her forehead which is a blessed symbol used to protect women and their husbands (and thus ironic here since it neither protects her from illness nor Krishna from grief).
- **Philosophy:** For Krishna, death is the ultimate reality 'There are no more surprises and shocks in life...Nothing else will worry or interest me ... hereafter'. Krishna later tells one of his students not to be anxious about an academic concern, since 'they are trash ... all the time the problem of living and dying is crushing us ...'. His reality now exists outside the realm of literature and exams, since their rules are inadequate to deal with the larger questions of life. Likewise, he shuns life's 'illusions' to absorb himself in 'the barest truths and facts'. Krishna finds comfort in his theory of 'the law of life', meaning that the moment the umbilical cord is cut, we are alone and continue to be so until death. Narayan's own philosophical viewpoint seems to underpin two incidents: the doctor's certainty of Susila's recovery and the headmaster's conviction of his own death date. Here the author conveys the notion that no matter how much confidence and belief you may invest in the future, it is impossible to predict.

Author's craft

- **Irony:**
 - Krishna is initially amused by Susila's worship of the gods, calling it her 'deep secret life' and he lightly mocks her beliefs, teasingly calling her a 'yogi'. Yet his former amusement and joking soon evaporate once he realises he can contact her spiritually after her death, recognising for himself the immense peace those 'magical words' can bring.
 - Despite acting as a 'father figure' to the children in his school, the headmaster appears to fail in his own duties as a father.

- **Foreshadowing:** The poem that Krishna ‘writes’ for his wife ironically prefigures later events, as it contains spiritual vocabulary ‘phantom...apparition...angel-light’. In Chapter Three Krishna’s prophetic simile regarding Susila ‘like a vision’ and her ‘unearthly loveliness’ also subtly hint at forthcoming episodes.
- **Language:**
 - Krishna’s use of impersonal forms (rather than the possessive ‘my’) when first referring to his daughter (‘the child’) and his wife (‘that girl’) feels remote. It reflects a fear of responsibility and maintains a distance from them – since he recognises that the academic world he inhabits is far removed from the domestic world he envisages. Once gaining sole responsibility for Leela, however, he mostly refers to her as ‘my child’.
 - **Repetition:** This is used to convey the doctor’s misplaced confidence and optimism ‘nothing to worry about ...’
 - **Present Tense:** Narayan momentarily switches to this tense from the past tense immediately after Susila’s death via Krishna’s diary extract in order to keep her memory alive. It also conveys the immediacy of this tragic event ‘I am blind, dumb, and dazed’ and helps us to identify with his intense pain and suffering.
 - **Style:** The author employs an uncomplicated, direct style in his novel which is echoed in the headmaster’s words ‘Children have taught me to speak plainly’.
- **Contrast:** Narayan contrasts Krishna’s hurried panic at the railway station in Chapter Two with Susila’s calm and composed actions. His frantic movements are communicated by the numerous questions and exclamation marks, inclusion of short, jerky sentences and persistent dialogue, whilst Susila is ‘sitting serenely ... merely smiled ... unconcernedly moved on’.
- **Setting:** Both the hostel Krishna has been living in at the start and the college he has been working in depict a stifled academic world, where routine has become monotonous. Clearly the attraction has been one of comfort and security. In contrast, his rented house exudes energy, enhanced by the presence of Leela and Susila’s fresh approach to life.
- **Structure:** Narayan’s narrator Krishna relates events as he experiences them, in the first person singular, giving us a direct, yet subjective insight into events. The story unfolds effortlessly in a seemingly day-to-day basis, as we follow him in his spiritual, mental and emotional journey.

Section C anthology poems

The following section contains some detailed teaching points relating to a number of the poems from Section C of the *Edexcel Anthology for IGCSE English Language (Specification A) and IGCSE English Literature*.

Five poems are explored here in some detail, to illustrate the kinds of topics on which teachers may wish to focus when presenting these to their students. There is a summary and introduction to each poem, and some ideas on structure and form, language and comments. While the following section does not deal comprehensively with every one of the poems to be studied, the examples included are intended to give a number of approaches that can be adopted as appropriate with all of the other prescribed poems.

These notes represent some teachers' views on the texts. They are provided only to stimulate ideas for teachers; they are not intended to be handed out to students as revision notes. They will not inform the setting of questions or mark schemes.

Teaching the poetry anthology

If – Rudyard Kipling

Summary

Kipling's famous poem about human nature offers a catalogue of thoughtful advice to a young male, consisting of the many qualities he feels are essential to become a man, such as self-belief, modesty, humility and truthfulness.

Introducing the poem

'What advice would a father give to a son who is ready to leave home and venture out into the world on his own? Explore the different areas of life you think the father feels are important enough to guide his son through. Imagine the conversation between them.'

Structure and form

Kipling's guidance takes the form of a series of opposites, for example, 'keep...lose' and 'trust...doubt'. These slowly build up in the course of the poem to reveal only in the concluding line the main reward for doing so, that is, as a symbol of having reached manhood. The alternate rhyme scheme maintains the momentum of the counsel and since this lengthy poem appears to be merely one sentence long, this implies the spiritual and mental journey to manhood is a long, complicated and challenging one.

Language/comments

- The long list of qualities that Kipling suggests lead to manhood are numerous (and viewed realistically, appear collectively unattainable). This is why the future conditional tense is repeatedly used (signalled by 'if') as it expresses the sheer difficulty of the task. Yet the rewards offered justify any sacrifices made 'Yours is the earth ... you'll be a Man'.
- By constant repetition of the second person singular 'you' (with implications of a plural address too, encompassing us all), the narrator achieves a direct appeal and maintains our interest. By the end of the poem we are intrigued to discover where his lengthy advice leads.
- The imperatives issued do not feel commanding, but friendly and good-natured 'don't deal in lies ... don't give way to hating'. The focus is on avoiding excesses in life (notice they are largely inner qualities and values, as material excesses are only briefly mentioned 'winnings'). The advice is to approach all things moderately, with a degree of patience and maturity.

- Poetic techniques strengthen the counsel. Fulfilling every moment in as energetic and enthusiastic manner as possible is advocated in the metaphor ‘fill the ... minute/With sixty seconds’ worth of distance run’. Personification is used to promote caution against ‘impostors’, such as ‘Triumph and Disaster’.
- Although the majority of the guidance is sensible and prudent, there are hints of recklessness too, as in the area of gambling ‘risk it all’, suggesting chances can be taken and that life should not be mundane but lived to the full. The important aspect is not to publicise any losses.
- The crux of the poem, revealed in the final two lines, expresses the huge rewards that can be expected. Significantly, being ‘a Man’ is perceived as infinitely better ‘which is more’ than acquiring ‘the earth and all that’s in it’. The final exclamation mark can be viewed as a closing symbol of encouragement.

Half-past Two – U. A. Fanthorpe

Summary

A primary school child is made to stay behind after school, but his concept of time does not yet include numerals, only daily time modules such as ‘TVtime’, so he therefore does not really grasp when he can go home. There is a clear contrast in this event’s significance: whereas this punishment represents a big moment in the boy’s life, his teacher has almost forgotten about it and when she sees him waiting in the classroom for her, dismisses him home in an instant.

Introducing the poem

‘Memories of Primary School: Remember your early days there: what were they like? Try to recollect some experiences: your hopes, fears or even your relationship with a particular teacher. Is there one memory in particular that you will never forget?’

Structure and form

An eleven stanza, free verse poem of equal line length written in the third (and occasionally first) person singular. These small three-lined ‘chunks’ of narrative, aided by enjambement, resemble the small boy’s tendency to compartmentalise his day into time modules, as mirrored in Fanthorpe’s presentation of his words, which lack spaces.

Language/comments

- The fairy-tale opening ‘Once upon a’ builds our expectations of a narrative and links perfectly to a child’s experience at primary school, aptly delivered in a child-like tone. This is one technique Fanthorpe uses (and later we find echoes of in the poem) to encourage us to identify with the boy’s experiences and see the world through his eyes.
- The points of view and voices of different characters are established through language and successfully blended. Capital letters differentiate the teacher’s voice ‘Very Wrong’ and the drawn-out emphasis she places on these words; to the extent they are magnified in the boy’s mind as having a great consequence. Ironically the enormity of the ‘offence’ is immediately undermined and trivialised by the narrator in line three, (‘I forget what it was’), whose own voice is distinguished via brackets.
- Fanthorpe’s language choices match the vocabulary stereotypically heard in primary schools ‘cross ... wicked’ and help locate our imaginations within that setting. The lack of spaces in the boy’s language ‘Gettinguptime’ communicate his interpretation of their visual representation, as this is exactly how he hears these words spoken. To a small boy these are indeed ‘important times’ since they dictate his daily life – he has as yet no comprehension of numeric time. The theme of childhood innocence is heightened here, but we are not invited to laugh at him, merely understand his predicament and comprehend how small matters can adopt a huge significance for a child.
- Stanza six marks a move away from conversational to more poetic language, with the use of personification ‘little eyes ... two long legs’ and the onomatopoeic ‘click’. Yet despite the elevated mood of this verse, the language still remains child-like in tone, as the vocabulary demonstrates a teaching method commonly used to tell the time. Enjambement carries the element of fantasy introduced here into the next two verses, as if we too are soaring with his imagination ‘onceupona ... timefors ... escaped’. The pattern of four repetitions of ‘into’ appeals to our senses of smell, sound (with the oxymoron ‘silent noise’) and touch, retaining the dream-like quality already introduced, as if he himself is daydreaming.

- Italics express the teacher's direct speech and express how trivial the matter was for her too, like the narrator earlier. Notice she speedily releases him from his prolonged waiting in a mere two sentences, as if his 'detention' was really of little consequence to her. Fanthorpe attempts to portray his teacher in an unfavourable light as she describes her as 'scuttling in', just like a small animal. The teacher has also remained nameless and is subsequently depersonalised throughout the poem, often referred to as 'She ... Her'. The poet therefore possibly uses her as an example to criticise adults who are dismissive of children in this manner, reinforced by the casual way 'she slotted him back'.
- The nostalgic quality at the end of the poem 'he never forgot' emits a refreshing feeling of freedom, a temporary world lacking time restrictions, with the lovely fantasy image of a 'clockless land' and the personification of the final line 'Where time hides tick-less waiting to be born'. Living in a modern world of schedules and appointments, we too can empathise with this euphoric state once in a while.

Piano – D. H. Lawrence

Summary

The narrator mentally returns to the warmth and comfort of childhood days at home with his mother by the piano. Yet he appears to berate himself for doing so, viewing himself as less masculine for giving in to his nostalgic impulses.

Introducing the poem

‘Recall one positive childhood memory spent with your family (for example a birthday party, the arrival of a new puppy, etc). Try to bring it alive in your imagination by using the different senses. Describe the moment or event, adding as much detail as possible.’

Structure and form

The uniformity of this poem, with its rhyming couplets, equal number of lines per verse and regular syllable count, match the sense of harmony and security the childhood memories bring. Despite the hints of negativity shown by the words ‘insidious ... betrays ... weeps’, the rhyme and rhythm remain upbeat, reminiscent of the many references to music and its power to uplift.

Language/comments

- Initially the mix of first and third person singular feels curious, as the narrator begins using ‘me ... I’ but then appears to refer to himself as ‘A child’ for the memory, adding distance, as if it is not really him. We soon realise, however, that this is a deliberate ploy by the narrator to express the internal battle he is feeling – as if he is fighting the memories and the sentiments of personal weakness they will bring.
- Allusions to sound are echoed throughout the poem and in the first stanza the calm of ‘Softly’ is contrasted with the powerfully, musical onomatopoeic ‘boom of the tinkling strings’ (which is enhanced and prolonged by the internal rhyme), as he advances in his memory. This technique is later repeated in ‘tinkling’ in stanza two. Song is a powerful tool here (further evoked in ‘insidious mastery of song’), capable of transporting him into childhood ‘taking me back ... vista of years’.
- The narrator’s description of his mother in line four, though short, speaks volumes. His relationship with her is a physically close one ‘pressing’, and suggests a devoted bonding. Her feet are ‘poised’, implying elegance, sophistication, dignity and precision and her mood is happy ‘smiles’.
- Despite his attempts to be strong and fight the memory, it is too compelling and reverberates to the very core of his being ‘the heart of me weeps to belong’. Lawrence’s language choice here ‘weeps’ suggests the emotional state the narrator has been reduced to: one of intense sadness and poignancy. This is further reinforced in the final line ‘I weep like a child’ indicating the internal struggle has been lost, since here, unlike earlier, the first person singular ‘I’ is openly associated in this simile with ‘a child’. Yet the recollection’s setting is positive, bringing familiarity and comfort ‘old Sunday evenings ... hymns in the cosy parlour’.
- Feeling defeated in verse three, yet strangely elated, the narrator accepts his fate ‘my manhood is cast/Down in the flood of remembrance’. He is overwhelmed by the unstoppable waves of emotion he has experienced, intensified by the use of the present tense throughout the poem, and is inconsolable ‘I weep’. The juxtaposition of man and child appears at odds for him, as if loyalty to both cannot co-exist in his world.

Poem at Thirty-Nine – Alice Walker

Summary

Memories of a deceased father and her relationship with him are brought to life by Walker in this (seemingly autobiographical) celebratory poem as she details the qualities she admired in him and how much he taught her about life. Revealing her age in the title suggests maturity and brings a better, more knowledgeable appreciation of parents in this exploration of paternal love.

Introducing the poem

‘What qualities do you most admire in one of your parents/guardians? Detail the ones you believe you share, explaining why. Are there any qualities that others say you have inherited that you are not so happy about?’

Structure and form

Free verse suits the mood of this six-stanza poem, as Walker’s tone is quite conversational (yet coupled with lively poetic phrases), flowing freely on the page as she flits from memories in the past, to her subsequent actions in the present. Enjambement appears more abundantly in some verses than others, as at times her thoughts are more spontaneous, whilst at others she uses punctuation to consciously pause and reflect on her father.

Language/comments

- The direct opening line ‘How I miss my father’ is echoed later in the fourth stanza with one addition which reinforces it: an exclamation mark. Both lines are the only ones in the poem to appear as full sentences, highlighting the sadness she continues to feel at his loss and blatant refusal to feel ashamed about it, as age is no barrier to grief. This repeated euphemism for death (along with ‘before the end’) serves to comfort her as, despite the fact his death could have happened several years before, the pain of his bereavement is still deeply felt.
- Regret and sadness are communicated in stanza one as the implication is he had little time for her from the start of her life, probably because of work commitments continually exhausting him.
- Walker’s present actions in verse two evoke imagined past memories of her father dealing with his finances, as he seemingly tried to set a good example by following the correct procedures. Her parents were descendants of freed slaves and lived as share-croppers. (A share-cropper is a tenant farmer who pays a large percentage of the crop value as rent, after being provided with all his equipment by a landowner.) Thus Walker could be hinting at using education as a means to move on from this difficult agricultural existence ‘to escape/the life he knew’ and has learnt from an early age the importance of being as financially independent as possible.
- Physical abuse is indicated in verse three, suggested by ‘beating’, which has connotations of violence and brutality. Yet she does not judge him and advocates the advice he gave her in being honest, highlighted by the alliteration ‘taught ... telling the truth’. Ironically she applies the word ‘grieved’ to her father, not herself, as she feels guilty at her past actions and how they must have upset him during his life.
- The dark mood which began to settle in stanza three now changes to one of happiness and celebration of both her father and herself until the poem’s close. The original simile ‘He cooked like a person/dancing/in a yoga meditation’ reflects the joy and passion he felt whilst preparing food, which totally absorbed him, and communicates his delight in sharing it.

- Assonance across the verses ‘cooked ... good food’ links her father’s past actions with her present ones ‘Now I look cook’. She is proud of their similarities and aptly chooses a culinary metaphor to express how she lives her life, which hints at a carefree ‘tossing this and that’ and generous existence (another connection to her father) ‘happy to feed/whoever strays my way’.
- In the final stanza we again sense the regret she felt at the start and reveals, as was hinted earlier, that she wasn’t the ‘perfect’ daughter during his lifetime, as expressed in the phrase ‘**grown** to admire’. The qualities she advocates at the end are homely, active ones which achieve a balance: at times she is energetic, at other times she is contemplative and peaceful. These are in keeping with the characteristics she admired in her father.

A Mother in a Refugee Camp – Chinua Achebe

Please note that this is a different version of the poem to that used in the legacy IGCSE in English Literature (4360), previous notes should be discarded.

Summary

An emotionally touching, heavily descriptive poem narrating the utter devotion of a refugee mother towards her son, making her moments with him even more distressing and precious since she knows his time is limited, due to the effects of disease or malnutrition.

Introducing the poem

Visual stimulation: showing either newsreel, newspaper photographs or charity leaflets, discuss and describe the shocking situations witnessed across the world, via the media, of some refugees and the conditions they endure.

Structure and form

In the first three lines, Achebe manages to summarise the entire poem. The second section, which follows the dots, includes much descriptive detail, shocking us with its honest portrayal of daily life for these refugees. Economical with punctuation, this free verse poem deliberately employs varying line lengths and enjambement which reflect the continual suffering and catalogue of pain these refugees endure – as if there is so much suffering to relate, Achebe finds it hard to know where to stop.

Language/comments

- By referring to the revered ‘Madonna and Child’ in the first line, Achebe instantly evokes religious images of purity and worship, therefore automatically raising the status of the refugee mother and child. It suggests her devotion far surpasses anything previously witnessed and also attaches a sacred, spiritual quality to her love for her son. The opening is full of pathos – but the poem invites us more to admire her courage and dedication in the face of adversity, rather than pity her.
- The fourth line introduces negative, intentionally repulsive language portraying the awfulness of the situation for these refugees. An appeal to our senses of smell, sight and touch is strong ‘odors of diarrhea ... blown-empty bellies ... combed the rust-colored hair’. Achebe’s language is powerfully direct and harsh, as he wants us to experience the cruel reality of the effects of war or political persecution, that is, the suffering of thousands of innocent victims. Physical descriptions of skeletal children visually appal us, ‘washed-out ribs ... dried-up bottoms’. Alliteration here ‘bottoms ... behind blown ... bellies’ commands our attention – we are not allowed to turn away from this sickening sight.
- The vocabulary of death ‘ghost’ is associated with the mother’s preparing us, as at the start in the phrase ‘soon would have to forget’, for the inevitable outcome of loss she will encounter and maybe even hinting at her own mortality as she too is probably physically frail. We greatly respect the mother’s positive spirit ‘smile ... pride ... humming in her eyes ... carefully’ as her actions are untainted by the horrific circumstances enveloping her. The devotion and love she feels towards her son are unconditional as she tries hard to maintain a daily, normal routine in a situation which is far from normal. This heart-breaking, simple gesture is imbued with sadness – he has barely any hair left on his ‘skull’ (another skeletal reminder), yet she meticulously combs it anyway, in preparation for his death.
- Achebe sharply reminds us of their previously normal existence ‘breakfast and school’, bringing them closer to the reader as these are part of our everyday routine too. Although the closing simile returns to the son’s forthcoming death and is heavy with foreboding, we are left with an absolute admiration for the mother’s human spirit. Her love is stronger than the devastation around them, even though she is realistic enough to know she cannot prevent its fatal consequences.

Remember – Christina Rossetti

Summary

Rossetti's sonnet explores the theme of grief experienced after a partner's death, initially the narrator advocates the partner mourning her, but then changes her mind and advises it is better to forget her and get on with his life.

Introducing the poem

Descriptive writing: Imagine you are one partner from a relationship, perhaps a husband or wife, who knows you are going to die from an illness. Write a short letter to your remaining partner, which details the difficult thoughts and heartbreaking feelings of being close to death.

Structure and form

Rossetti was fond of experimenting with the sonnet form, which is why she changes the rhyme scheme at the end of this poem from the two most commonly used at that time. She uses ABBA twice, but then, instead of following the pattern of using CDE twice, she changes it to CDDECE. Significantly, she deliberately does so, as the meaning of the poem changes in the sestet to the possibility of forgetting and being happy, rather than instructions to remember, which occur in the octet. The use of iambic pentameter aids the softness of the rhythm and message that Rossetti is trying to convey.

Language/comments

- Patterns of repetition are an important feature of this sonnet, such as 'Remember ... gone ... no more'. The first 'Remember me' is addressed directly to her loved one and although it is an imperative, does not feel in any way imposing or commanding. The personal pronouns signal this is a very personal, emotional poem.
- The euphemism for death 'gone away' is sadly touching and its power is heightened by the addition of distance 'gone far'. Rossetti's metaphor 'silent land' portrays a calm, peaceful afterlife and serves to lessen the pain of her departure for him.
- The alliteration of 'hold me by the hand' makes clear their relationship and hints at the physical contact that will be lost, coupled with the monosyllables in line three which add an air of finality. The poignant tone is increased here by the allusion to their future, with even the possibility of a wedding 'that you planned'.
- Rossetti's punctuation break of a semi-colon in line seven indicates the change of meaning she advocates in the sestet, as she hints at an unselfish love, with the potentiality of forgetting her. She would rather he forget her and be happy, than wallow in grief for her — 'darkness and corruption'. The ending is therefore optimistic as the poem allows for the opportunity of moving on and forgetting, in contrast to the opening which requested his remembrances of her.

Resources

Please note that while resources are correct at the time of publication, they may be updated or withdrawn from circulation. Website addresses may change at any time.

Anthology

Students will be provided with the *Edexcel Anthology for IGCSE English Language (Specification A) and IGCSE English Literature* which will be available to download free of charge from the Edexcel website.

Many English course books used in schools contain sections which relate to literature. Additional guidance can be found in the books/series listed below.

Textbooks

Gill R — *Mastering English Literature* (Palgrave, 2006) ISBN 1403944881

Powling A, O'Connor J and Barton G — *New Oxford English 4* (Oxford University Press, 1996) ISBN 0198311966

Study guides

Letts Literature Guides (study guides on specific individual texts)

York Notes (study guides on specific individual texts)

Websites

The internet offers sites with background information on selected texts and authors. Teachers may also find relevant teaching material on these sites. A selection of websites is listed below.

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/english_literature/	GCSE revision site for English Literature
www.englishresources.co.uk	Free teaching and revision resources
www.novelguide.com	Free online literary guides to texts
www.teachit.co.uk	Teaching and revision resources for teachers

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