

GCE AS/A LEVEL



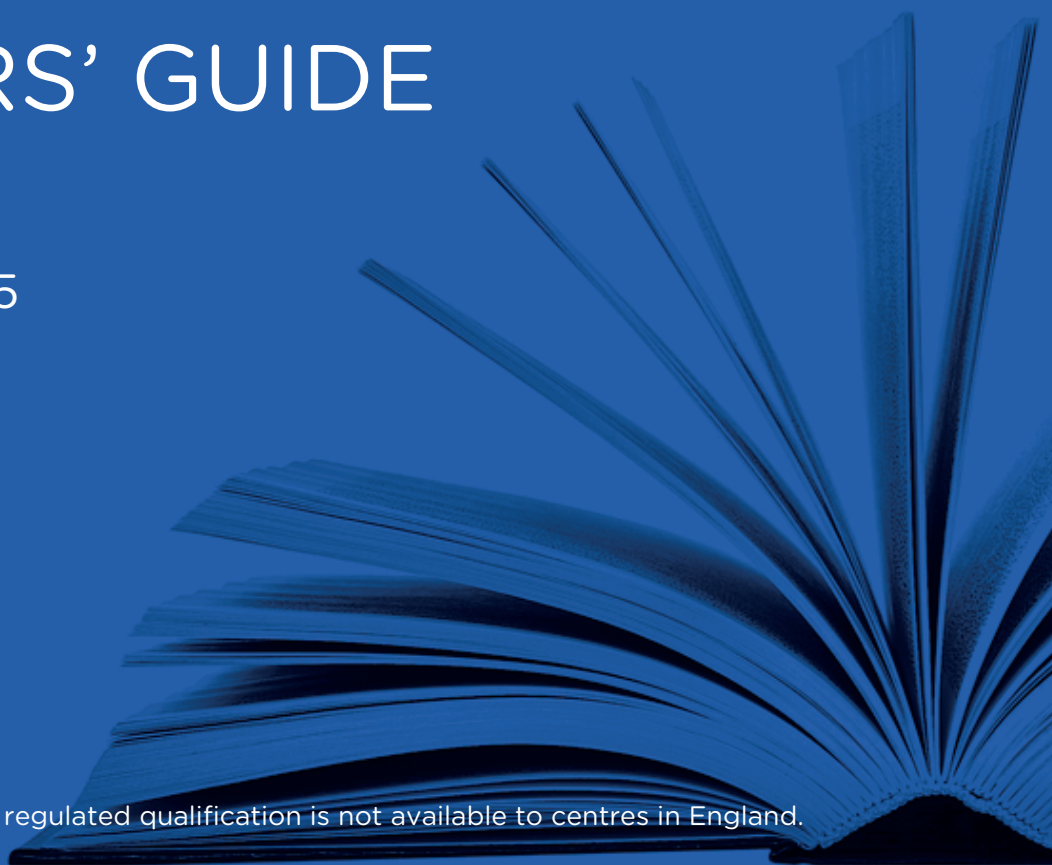
WJEC GCE AS/A LEVEL in ENGLISH LITERATURE

ACCREDITED BY WELSH GOVERNMENT

TEACHERS' GUIDE

Teaching from 2015

This Welsh Government regulated qualification is not available to centres in England.



INTRODUCTION

The **WJEC AS and A level English Literature** specification, accredited by Welsh Government for first teaching from September 2015, is available to:

- All schools and colleges in Wales
- Schools and colleges in independent regions such as Northern Ireland, Isle of Man and the Channel Islands

The AS will be awarded for the first time in Summer 2016, using grades A–E; the A level will be awarded for the first time in summer 2017, using grades A*–E.

The AS and A level course is challenging and stimulating, encouraging learners to think creatively about literary texts and the ways in which we respond to them. It provides learners with the opportunities of reading widely and for making creative and informed responses to each of the major literary genres of poetry, prose and drama.

Wider reading can support their understanding of their literary skills as well as of key concepts and issues. It will also play an important part in the unseen aspect of Unit 3 and in the non-exam assessment at A2 as they explore possible texts for comparison. AS and A level learners should read around the set texts and share their reading with their peers.

Independent learning lies at the heart of the course, encouraging learners to develop the kinds of skills that are required in higher education. As well as the close analysis of literary texts, learners should also consider how texts relate to one another and to literary traditions, movements and genres, how texts are interpreted differently over time and the cultural and contextual influences on readers and writers.

Being able to write clearly, coherently and concisely is a crucial skill to be developed, especially as learners will be required to answer different types of questions in examinations. Developing an awareness of the variety of questions and the Assessment Objectives and their weighting will be important for them to succeed.

The AS specification has been designed to serve as the first half of a full A level course, and also as a discrete course for learners wishing to follow just one year of study. The course covers a very similar range of content to the A level, and requires very similar skills, but the approach is broader. The AS aims to introduce learners to the literary genres of prose, poetry and drama. The full set of requirements is outlined in the specification which can be accessed on the WJEC website.

The A level aims to deepen the knowledge and skills acquired at AS. The second year of the course allows time for learners to become confident in understanding and using linguistic increase in confidence in analysing language, form and structure and how they create meaning. It will widen learners' knowledge of the key concepts and issues, and their understanding of how literature works in context. In addition, they will be able to reflect on the connections between texts and to consider how different interpretations of those texts influences their own reading and analysis. The non-exam assessment gives learners the opportunity to read independently and to explore concepts and ideas of personal interest.

Additional ways that WJEC can offer support:

- Specimen assessment materials
- Face-to-face CPD events
- Examiners' reports on each question paper
- Free access to past question papers and mark schemes via the secure website
- Direct access to the subject officer
- Free online resources
- Exam Results Analysis
- Online Examination Review

AIMS OF THE TEACHERS' GUIDE

The principal aim of the Teachers' Guide is to support teachers in the delivery of the new **WJEC AS and A level English Literature** specification and to offer guidance on the requirements of the qualification and the assessment process.

The guide is not intended as a comprehensive reference, but as support for professional teachers to develop

stimulating and exciting courses tailored to the needs and skills of their own learners in their particular institutions.

The guide offers assistance to teachers with regard to possible activities and links to useful digital resources (both our own, freely available, digital materials and some from external sources) to provide ideas for immersive and engaging lessons.

SUMMARY OF THE SPECIFICATION FROM 2015

UNIT	TOPIC	APPROACH	AOs	MARK
1 Prose and Drama	Section A	Prose Fiction Pre-1900 (closed book)	Two-part question	
		Essay on extract	AO1 (10) AO2 (10)	20
		Essay	AO1 (5) AO2 (5) AO3 (15) AO5 (15)	40
	Section B	Drama (closed book)	One essay from a choice of two questions	AO1 (20) AO2 (15) AO3 (15) AO5 (10) 60
2 Poetry Post-1900	Section A	Critical Analysis (open book)	One essay from a choice of two questions on a named poem	AO1 (20) AO2 (20) 40
	Section B	Poetry Comparison (open book)	One essay from a choice of two questions comparing two poets' work	AO1 (10) AO2 (10) AO3 (20) AO4 (30) AO5 (10) 80

SUMMARY OF THE SPECIFICATION FROM 2015

UNIT	TOPIC	APPROACH	AOs	MARK
3 Poetry Pre-1900 and Unseen Poetry	Section A	Poetry Pre-1900 (open book)	Two-part question	
		Essay on extract	AO1 (5) AO2 (10)	15
		Essay	AO1 (10) AO2 (5) AO3 (30)	45
	Section B	Unseen Poetry	Compare two poems (one set poem and one from a choice of three)	AO1 (15) AO2 (15) AO4 (30) 60
4 Shakespeare	Section A	Shakespeare Extract (closed book)	Essay on extract	AO1 (15) AO2 (30) 45
	Section B	Shakespeare Essay (closed book)	One essay from a choice of two	AO1 (15) AO2 (15) AO3 (30) AO5 (15) 75
5 Prose Study	Non-exam Assessment	Prose Study	One 2,500–3,500 word essay comparing a pre-2000 and post-2000 text	AO1 (30) AO2 (30) AO3 (30) AO4 (15) AO5 (15) 120

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES: SUMMARY

Unit		AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4	AO5
1	Section A i)	✓	✓			
	Section A ii)	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Section B	✓	✓	✓		✓
2						
	Section A	✓	✓			
	Section B	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Section A i)	✓	✓			
	Section A ii)	✓	✓	✓		
	Section B	✓	✓		✓	
4	Section A	✓	✓			
	Section B	✓	✓	✓		✓
5	Non-exam Assessment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

KEY ASPECTS OF THE SPECIFICATION FROM 2015

RESPONSES TO LITERARY TEXTS

AREA OF STUDY	DESCRIPTION
<u>Key Words (AO1)</u>	Explaining and defining the details of AO1.
<u>Developing an Academic Style</u>	Assisting learners in writing in a style that is fitting for an academic essay.
<u>Introductions</u>	Ensuring that learners start their essays in a way that addresses task and texts.
<u>Writing with Economy and Precision</u>	Working on writing concisely and effectively for both the examination and non-exam assessment.

ANALYSING MEANINGS IN LITERARY TEXTS

AREA OF STUDY	DESCRIPTION
<u>Developing Close Analysis</u>	Keeping textual analysis as the focus of a literary essay.
<u>Building Analytical Skills</u>	Dealing with extracts and unseen texts by breaking them up and giving appropriate time to reading and reflecting.

AREA OF STUDY

Key Words (AO1)

Key Points:

- Need to know the various elements of AO1, it can be taken for granted that learners can write coherently and accurately.
- Essential that learners' essay-writing skills are taught, coached and developed.
- Assessing essays is an ideal opportunity to give feedback to individuals and to respond to teaching groups with general comments on how to improve expression.
- Understanding the key elements in Assessment Objective 1 can support you as you assess work, and enable AO1 to be taught more effectively.

AMPLIFICATION FOR TEACHING

Breakdown of the key elements of AO1:

1. Informed

Candidates will show an understanding and knowledge of a text, whether it be an extract/poem or a whole text/collection. They will be clearly aware of the differences between poetry, prose and drama.

2. Personal and creative

Candidates will avoid mechanical and literal approaches and be thoughtful and personal.

3. Concepts

An understanding of the conventions of poetry, prose or drama as well as a grasp of ideas and attitudes arising from the texts studied.

4. Terminology

Accurate use of literary terminology by candidates.

5. Coherent, accurate expression

Measured in the way knowledge is used as well as in the candidate's ability to organise material and choose an appropriate academic style and register.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

SECTION: RESPONSES TO LITERARY TEXTS

EXAM LEVEL: AS/A2

AREA OF STUDY

Developing an Academic Style

Key Points:

- Too often, learners write in a register which isn't fitting for study at this level.
- Not only can accuracy be a problem, but also the use of slang or informal language can affect the quality of learners' work.
- The use of the correct register, tone and the application of accurate terminology are teachable skills that can be improved over the duration of the course, as is the ability to write coherent, organised essays.

AMPLIFICATION FOR TEACHING



Learners should:

- as a general rule, be encouraged to write in the third person
- avoid being definite about meaning – phrases such as 'This suggests...' or 'This implies...' are preferable to 'This means...'
- keep quotations brief and purposeful
- be encouraged to write clearly and not complicate their essays by using language they think will impress the examiner
- use footnotes when referencing texts
- provide an accurate bibliography at the end of the essay

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC > A Level English Literature > Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC > A Level English Literature > Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

SECTION: RESPONSES TO LITERARY TEXTS

EXAM LEVEL: AS/A2

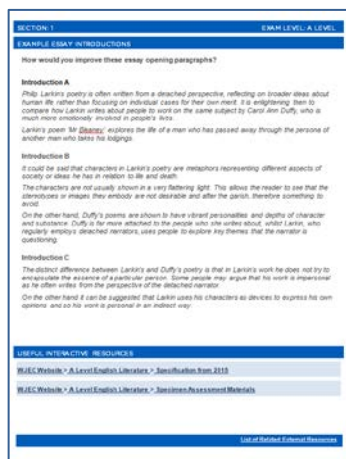
AREA OF STUDY

Introductions

Key Points:

- Impressing the examiner from the very first sentence of an essay can have a positive impact. More importantly, being fully in control of the material from the outset will help learners to write more coherent essays.
- Learners should avoid the 'I am going to write about...' approach and be more creative in their academic style. A 'stock' introduction won't work.
- It is vital that the task is taken into consideration from the start of the essay; learners are not being asked to reveal everything they know about a text and should limit their response to information that is relevant to the question posed.
- A good introduction can be an effective way for learners to show that they have an overview of a text/poet they're studying.
- It can be useful for learners if they have an awareness of the AOs; a good introduction provides an opportunity for general comments that might address a number of AOs.

AMPLIFICATION FOR TEACHING



Improving Introductions:

- **Select the image (left)** for three example essay introductions. Ask the learners (as a class or in groups) to explain what changes could be made to each of the introductions to improve them.
- As an extension activity you could provide the learners with an example question from the Specimen Assessment Materials (see the 'Additional Resources' section below for the link) and ask them to write an introduction. The learners should then compare the introductions they have written and decide which is best, giving justification for their decision.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

EXAMPLE ESSAY INTRODUCTIONS

How would you improve these opening paragraphs on the ways in which Larkin and Duffy write about people?

Introduction A

Philip Larkin's poetry is often written from a detached perspective, reflecting on broader ideas about human life rather than focusing on individual cases for their own merit. It is enlightening then to compare how Larkin writes about people to work on the same subject by Carol Ann Duffy, who is much more emotionally involved in people's lives. Larkin's poem 'Mr Bleaney' explores the life of a man who has passed away through the persona of another man who takes his lodgings.

Introduction B

It could be said that characters in Larkin's poetry are metaphors representing different aspects of society or ideas he has in relation to life and death. The characters are not usually shown in a very flattering light. This allows the reader to see that the stereotypes or images they embody are not desirable and after the garish descriptions, therefore something to avoid. On the other hand, Duffy's poems are shown to have vibrant personalities and depths of character and substance. Duffy is far more attached to the people who she writes about, whilst Larkin, who regularly employs detached narrators, uses people to explore key themes that the narrator is questioning.

Introduction C

The distinct difference between Larkin's and Duffy's poetry is that in Larkin's work he does not try to encapsulate the essence of a particular person. Some people may argue that his work is impersonal as he often writes from the perspective of the detached narrator. On the other hand it can be suggested that Larkin uses his characters as devices to express his own opinions and so his work is personal in an indirect way.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

SECTION: RESPONSES TO LITERARY TEXTS

EXAM LEVEL: AS/A2

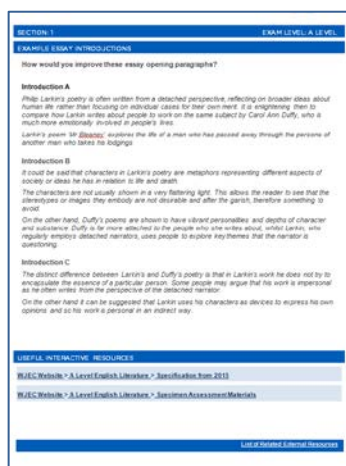
AREA OF STUDY

Writing with Economy and Precision

Key Points:

- Initially, setting an essay to be completed over a considerable duration may help to build learners' confidence. However, as the course progresses, less and less time should be given between setting the essay and the deadline for completion. Learners will develop their ability to work under pressure and learn to be more economical in their expression.
- Make learners plan essays under timed conditions and then write the opening point that they'd make, ask them to redraft the paragraph in as few words as possible – the ability to write coherently under timed conditions is one of the qualities assessed in an exam and learners need to practice this skill regularly.
- You could develop learners' understanding of concepts by starting lessons with a discussion, based on a theme considered by the writers they are studying. This should help learners to be more precise and economical in their treatment of concepts in their essays.
- Drafting and being given models of economical and precise writing can also make a difference. Avoiding superfluous comment that adds nothing to the engagement with the text can be easily avoided as you teach learners to avoid adopting narrative and descriptive approaches.

AMPLIFICATION FOR TEACHING



SECTION 1: EXAM LEVEL: A LEVEL

EXAMPLES: ESSAY INTRODUCTIONS

How would you improve these essay opening paragraphs?

Introduction A

Philip Larkin's poetry is often written from a detached perspective, reflecting on broader ideas about human life rather than focusing on individual cases for their own merit. It is engaging, then, to compare how Larkin writes about people to work on the same subject by Carol Ann Duffy, who is much more emotionally involved in people's lives.

Larkin's poem 'Mr Boggus' explores the life of a man who has passed away through the persona of another man who takes no feelings.

Introduction B

It could be said that characters in Larkin's poetry are metaphors representing different aspects of society or ideas he has in relation to life and death.

The characters are not usually shown in a very flattering light. This allows the reader to see that the stereotypes or images they embody are not desirable and after the poem, therefore something to avoid.

On the other hand, Duffy's poems are shown to have vibrant personalities and depths of character and substance. Duffy is far more attached to the people who she writes about, whilst Larkin, who regularly employs detached narrators, asks people to explore key themes that the narrator is questioning.

Introduction C

The distinct difference between Larkin's and Duffy's poetry is that in Larkin's work he does not try to encapsulate the essence of a particular person. Some people may argue that his work is impersonal as he often writes from the perspective of the detached narrator.

On the other hand it can be suggested that Larkin uses his characters as devices to express his own opinions, and so his work is personal in an indirect way.

USEFUL, INTERACTIVE RESOURCES

[WJEC Website - A Level English Literature - Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC Website - A Level English Literature - Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

[List of Selected External Resources](#)

Improving Economy and Precision:

- Select the image (left)** for two example responses of different levels of conciseness and a sample task that requires learners to rewrite a paragraph provided, to read more economically and more precisely.
- Provide learners with examples of paragraph 3 (or similar text of your choice, that is neither economical nor precise) and ask them to rewrite the presented text in class.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC > A Level English Literature > Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC > A Level English Literature > Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

Consider the differences in style and approach between the two responses below to the following question:

Consider the ways in which Donne writes about spiritual ideas while rooting the poetry in the physical world.

Response 1

In the poem 'The Sun Rising' by John Donne the poet gives an account of a lover waking up next to his lady and taking issue with the sun for disturbing his pleasure. There are many references to physical objects and activities in the poem such as windows, curtains, schoolboys, court huntsmen, wealth and alchemy which suggest that Donne's interests lie very much in the physical world even though he is writing about the feelings of lovers. (77 words).

Response 2

The catalogue of references to the physical world in 'The Sun Rising' from "the indies of spice and myne" to the activities of "harvest ants" serves to establish through contrast the spiritual superiority of the poet and his lover. (39 words).

The following response is neither economical nor precise. Rewrite it:

Reread 'Here'. Explore how Larkin presents the natural world in this poem.

The distinct difference between Larkin's and Duffy's poetry is that in Larkin's work he does not try to encapsulate the essence of a particular person. Some people may argue that his work is impersonal as he often writes from the perspective of the detached narrator.

On the other hand it can be suggested that Larkin uses his characters as devices to express his own opinions and so his work is personal in an indirect way.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

SECTION: ANALYSING MEANINGS IN LITERARY TEXTS

EXAM LEVEL: AS/A2

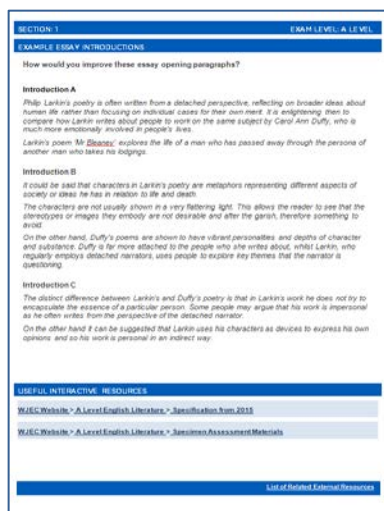
AREA OF STUDY

Developing Close Analysis

Key Points:

- As teachers, we know that the lynchpin of literary study is textual analysis (AO2). Learners need to remember that AO3, AO4 and AO5 should be used in order to illuminate their analysis of the text(s).
- This means avoiding essays that focus too much on contextual material. Historical or sociological essays might be interesting to read but won't help candidates be successful. Therefore, we must give valuable time in the classroom to developing literary analysis.
- Descriptive and narrative writing won't be helpful either and learners need to be taught to develop points fully instead of mere feature-spotting.
- Learners need to look closely at language, form and structure and always seek to link them to how writers create meaning.

INSPIRATION FOR TEACHING



Developing Close Analysis:

- **Select the image (left)** for an example activity that encourages learners to make as many connections as they can and look closely at the language used.
- Write a poem as a paragraph. Ask learners to put it back again in poetic form. Ask them to explain their choices and what is revealed about structure.
- Omit words from an extract/poem. Learners decide which words should go in the gap and what the correct word suggests. You could do this with specific types of words as well e.g. omit all the verbs.
- Take away all the dialogue in a drama extract so that you are left with the stage directions. How do these add to the understanding of the play/scene/themes/characters.
- Ask learners to find the most important line in an extract/poem and justify why. They can then look at the next most important line. They could even find the most important word/second most important word and so on.
- Learners can create their own guide to a text rather than spend money on published notes e.g. 'Everything you need to know about David Copperfield' could have the five key themes, five key points about Dickens's style, five key points about each major character with links to specific extracts.
- Bring in props used in the play and ask learners in their groups to analyse the way the playwright is using each one.
- Learners write under timed conditions half a page of analysis on a text, focusing on developing analysis fully. Type up some examples where the analysis could be developed and discuss how it could be done in a second draft.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

DEVELOPING CLOSE ANALYSIS

1. Ask learners to respond with any associations they make with the following word:

car

2. When you've collected learners' ideas, ask them for words connected to:

rich cream colour car

3. After hearing their responses, give them the following paragraph, asking them to look at how language creates meaning:

I'd seen it. Everybody had seen it. It was a rich cream color, bright with nickel, swollen here and there in its monstrous length with triumphant hat-boxes and supper-boxes and tool-boxes, and terraced with a labyrinth of wind-shields that mirrored a dozen suns. Sitting down behind many layers of glass in a sort of green leather conservatory, we started to town.

4. You can then go on and ask them to analyse the **whole passage** with a close focus on how Fitzgerald presents Gatsby.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

DEVELOPING CLOSE ANALYSIS

Passage from *The Great Gatsby*, by F. Scott Fitzgerald:

At nine o'clock, one morning late in July, Gatsby's gorgeous car lurched up the rocky drive to my door and gave out a burst of melody from its three-noted horn. It was the first time he had called on me, though I had gone to two of his parties, mounted in his hydroplane, and, at his urgent invitation, made frequent use of his beach.

"Good morning, old sport. You're having lunch with me to-day and I thought we'd ride up together."

He was balancing himself on the dashboard of his car with that resourcefulness of movement that is so peculiarly American – that comes, I suppose, with the absence of lifting work or rigid sitting in youth and, even more, with the formless grace of our nervous, sporadic games. This quality was continually breaking through his punctilious manner in the shape of restlessness. He was never quite still; there was always a tapping foot somewhere or the impatient opening and closing of a hand.

He saw me looking with admiration at his car.

"It's pretty, isn't it, old sport?" He jumped off to give me a better view. "Haven't you ever seen it before?"

I'd seen it. Everybody had seen it. It was a rich cream color, bright with nickel, swollen here and there in its monstrous length with triumphant hat-boxes and supper-boxes and tool-boxes, and terraced with a labyrinth of wind-shields that mirrored a dozen suns. Sitting down behind many layers of glass in a sort of green leather conservatory, we started to town.

I had talked with him perhaps half a dozen times in the past month and found, to my disappointment, that he had little to say. So my first impression, that he was a person of some undefined consequence, had gradually faded and he had become simply the proprietor of an elaborate road-house next door.

And then came that disconcerting ride. We hadn't reached West Egg village before Gatsby began leaving his elegant sentences unfinished and slapping himself indecisively on the knee of his caramel-colored suit.

"Look here, old sport," he broke out surprisingly. "What's your opinion of me, anyhow?" A little overwhelmed, I began the generalized evasions which that question deserves.

"Well, I'm going to tell you something about my life," he interrupted. "I don't want you to get a wrong idea of me from all these stories you hear."

So he was aware of the bizarre accusations that flavored conversation in his halls.

"I'll tell you God's truth." His right hand suddenly ordered divine retribution to stand by. "I am the son of some wealthy people in the Middle West – all dead now. I was brought up in America but educated at Oxford, because all my ancestors have been educated there for many years. It is a family tradition."

He looked at me sideways – and I knew why Jordan Baker had believed he was lying. He hurried the phrase "educated at Oxford," or swallowed it, or choked on it, as though it had bothered him before. And with this doubt, his whole statement fell to pieces, and I wondered if there wasn't something a little sinister about him, after all.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC > A Level English Literature > Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC > A Level English Literature > Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

SECTION: ANALYSING MEANINGS IN LITERARY TEXTS

EXAM LEVEL: AS/A2

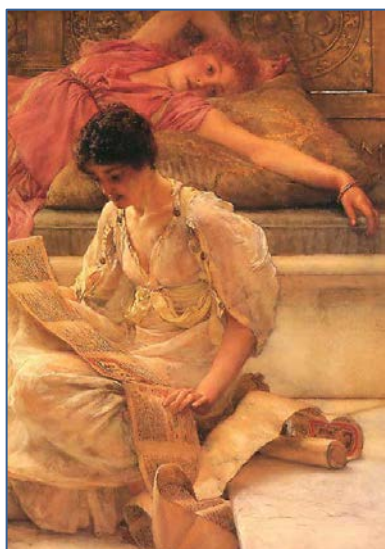
AREA OF STUDY

Building Analytical Skills

Key Points:

- A skills-based approach to this course might be a useful one for learners. AO2 should be driving each essay. Contextual detail, connections between texts and considering different interpretations should be used to illuminate learners' reading and understanding of the texts.
- Continuous exposure to individual poems will build the skills required not only for the set texts in Unit 2 and Unit 3 but also for the unseen poems in Section B of Unit 3.
- Continuous exposure to prose and drama extracts will also build the skills required in every other part of the specification.
- Getting the basics right will help to start with. Teachers need to ensure that learners focus on the key detail, annotate effectively and improve their reading speed.

AMPLIFICATION FOR TEACHING



Reading Extracts:

Stage 1: Reading

- Timing – learners must understand their personal reading speeds well in advance of any examination.
- Learners must keep their attention firmly focused on the text and not worry about how they will eventually be writing.
- Interpretation – this is where learners engage with the main shaping characteristics of the extract such as sub-genre; surface meaning; tone of voice; characterisation; and understand them in the light of their whole experience of reading prose.

Stage 2: Reflection and Annotation

- In stage 1 learners identified WHAT was in the passage, now they have to address HOW the writer has achieved what their reading has revealed to the learner.
- Learners should make sure they remain focused on the task – is the point they're making relevant?
- As learners reflect upon the passage in this way they will generate purposeful annotation which will help them to spot patterns in the work and, at the next stage, allow them to organise their response in a way that is not tied to a chronological treatment.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

KEY ASPECTS OF THE SPECIFICATION FROM 2015

CONTEXTS OF LITERARY TEXTS

AREA OF STUDY	DESCRIPTION
<u>Approaching Context</u>	Which contexts should candidates consider?
<u>Integrating Contexts</u>	Greater detail of the contexts learners should explore in their study and avoiding writing about context in ineffective ways.
<u>Task, Text and Context</u>	Structuring essay responses to ensure that context is used effectively to enhance learners' understanding of the set texts.

EXPLORING CONNECTIONS

AREA OF STUDY	DESCRIPTION
<u>Making the Most of Connections</u>	An introduction to making connections: general ideas to develop learners' skills.
<u>Poetry: Making Connections</u>	General guidance and teaching ideas on making connections between poems.
<u>Prose: Making Connections</u>	General guidance and teaching ideas on making connections between prose texts.

DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF LITERARY TEXTS

AREA OF STUDY	DESCRIPTION
<u>Getting the Basics Right</u>	Considering ways in which learners can address different interpretations of the texts and how to develop their engagement with other readings.
<u>Possible Approaches</u>	Some teaching ideas to develop learners' use of different interpretations as they read and write about texts.

SECTION: CONTEXTS OF LITERARY TEXTS

EXAM LEVEL: AS/A2

AREA OF STUDY

Approaching Context

Key Points:

- It is essential that context illuminates learners' reading of the text and doesn't become divorced from the analysis. The first thing that learners should try to do is identify the contextual focus in question.
- Teachers need to guide learners to other aspects relevant to question, such as the significance of **period/setting** of the play; significance of **concepts/issues** which the play addresses; wider **contextual influences on writing/performance** of the play and how an audience or reader might **receive** the play.
- In a literary essay, relevant contexts need to be approached through the text and not discussed separately.
- Learners should have an awareness of different types of contexts, but they might not be expected to address them all equally in an exam.

AMPLIFICATION FOR TEACHING



Matching texts to contexts:

- Context is particularly important in Section A part (ii) in Unit 3, Section B in Unit 4 and Unit 5 (non-exam assessment).
- Although context is worth a significant amount of marks in these units, candidates will gain little from merely showing their contextual knowledge.
- Their understanding of context should illuminate their reading of the text. The best candidates will confidently analyse connection between play and contexts and will discuss productively and perceptively the significance and influence of contexts on the text.
- **Select the image (left)** for an extract from *The Tempest* and an example response.
- Contexts which are potentially relevant to this passage include:
 - Master/servant relationships in the seventeenth century
 - Colonialism
 - Potential audience responses (seventeenth century and modern)
 - Seventeenth-century English ideas about different peoples and cultures
 - The role of the ruler
 - The age of discovery
 - Attitudes towards magic and the supernatural.
- Remind learners that writing about contexts should always contain reference to, and support from, the text.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC > A Level English Literature > Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC > A Level English Literature > Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

SECTION: MAKING THE MOST OF CONTENTS TO CONTEXTS OF LITERARY TEXTS

EXAM LEVEL: AS/A2

MATCHING TEXTS TO CONTEXTS

Extract from *The Tempest*:

- CALIBAN: As wicked dew as e'er my mother brush'd
With raven's feather from unwholesome fen
Drop on you both! a south-west blow on ye
And blister you all o'er!
- PROSPERO: For this, be sure, to-night thou shalt have cramps,
Side-stitches that shall pen thy breath up; urchins
Shall, for that vast of night that they may work,
All exercise on thee; thou shalt be pinch'd
As thick as honeycomb, each pinch more stinging
Than bees that made 'em.
- CALIBAN: I must eat my dinner.
This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother,
Which thou takest from me. When thou camest first,
Thou strokedst me and madest much of me, wouldst give me
Water with berries in't, and teach me how
To name the bigger light, and how the less,
That burn by day and night: and then I loved thee
And show'd thee all the qualities o' the isle,
The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile:
Cursed be I that did so! All the charms
Of Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats, light on you!
For I am all the subjects that you have,
Which first was mine own king: and here you sty me
In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me
The rest o' the island.

Example response concerning context:

'The cruelty implicit in Prospero's threats to Caliban "thou shalt be pinched" might have been received with little surprise or alarm by a seventeenth century audience accustomed to the harsh treatment of apprentices by their masters.'

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

SECTION: CONTEXTS OF LITERARY TEXTS

EXAM LEVEL: AS/A2

AREA OF STUDY

Integrating Contexts

Key Points:

- Learners should consider the **historical** context. What was happening in the period in which the text was first written/performed?
- Learners should consider the **cultural** context. Which cultural movements were influential at the time? Which ideas were being debated and discussed? Were there things happening in other spheres, such as science or art, that might have influenced the writer or the reading of the text?
- The **literary** context is important. Is the writer responding to another text? Are there changes in form or is the writer playing with form in any way?
- Learners should consider the importance of the **audience's response** to the text. Has this changed over time? Would different audiences have different views? The performance and reception of a drama might differ depending on the director, performers and audience.

AMPLIFICATION FOR TEACHING



Learners should:

- Connect contextual information to their textual analysis (AO2).
- Try to collate information from all types of context in their learning.
- Pick and choose relevant, illuminating contexts in their essays.

Learners should not:

- Write down all they know about the context of a text.
- Use contextual detail without connecting it to textual analysis (AO2).
- Fail to consider literary context.
- Write an historical/sociological/biographical essay because they're being driven by contextual information.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

SECTION: CONTEXTS OF LITERARY TEXTS

EXAM LEVEL: AS/A2

AREA OF STUDY

Task–Text–Context

Key Points:

- Task–Text–Context structure may be a good way for learners to use context effectively.
- Starting with the context means that an essay can quickly become historical or sociological in its focus rather than literary.
- It is problematic to start essays with analysis of text. Learners need to avoid writing down everything they know and their response needs to be tailored to a specific task.
- Focusing on the task to begin with will ensure that what is written is relevant. Using the task to lead on to the text will ensure that learners take a literary approach.
- Considering context after task and text should help learners to use the detail they have to support and illuminate their analysis.

AMPLIFICATION FOR TEACHING

SECTION 1

EXAM LEVEL: A LEVEL

PASSAGES BASED ON THE POETRY OF JOHN DONNE

Consider the view that "spiritual or otherwise, Donne's poems are consistently grounded in the physical world of his time."

[7]

Passage A

Donne lived in the age of discovery. Columbus first "discovered" America in 1492 and by the early 16th century, Magellan had circumnavigated the globe. At the end of the 16th century, explorers were trying to find the "South Sea," a new passage through America that would enable ships to reach the East. Donne is clearly grounded in the physical world of his time as he names "Spain" and the "Vineyard" which he makes use of the fact that cartographers in this period were drawing their maps based on new discoveries and he is comparing the doctors to these explorers. Donne compares himself to a "map," but on this last line:

Passage B

This poem is clearly grounded in the physical world. In his sickness, he thinks of himself as his doctor's "map." The word "map" suggests that he is exploring his body for the cause of his illness, trying to find a route, a "line" which will open the way to healing, reminding us of the Age of Discovery in which he lived. On the one hand, there is nothing more physical as Donne considers specific geography, "Pacific Sea." However, it is the geography of a world still being discovered in his time, implying humanity's lack of knowledge and understanding not only of the world but also of human health. There is a suggestion, perhaps, that the risk of discovery and exploration is itself limited. Yes, for England it brings empire and power but that power is also opposed by human weakness.

However, he uses these physical realities in abstract ways. After all, the map is a metaphor. Moreover, the fact that Donne is sick is something that cannot be mapped in what is, for Donne, spiritual reality rather than metaphorical ground. There is another Donne. Yes, there is a "line" and "map," both physical objects, but it is shared with the "line" and "map" of the spiritual realm. He speaks of "soul" and the rising and flowing down are not physical. They are spiritual, suggesting that the poems are not consistently grounded in the physical world of his time.

USEFUL, INTERACTIVE RESOURCES

WJEC Website > A Level English Literature > Specification from 2015

WJEC Website > A Level English Literature > Specimen Assessment Materials

List of Related External Resources

Writing about context:

- **Select the image (left)** for an example of passages related to John Donne's poetry.
- Ask learners to consider the passages and how they could be improved.

Extension activity: ask learners to rewrite the passages in order to achieve a mark in a higher band.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC > A Level English Literature > Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC > A Level English Literature > Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

PASSAGES BASED ON THE POETRY OF JOHN DONNE

Consider the ways in which Donne writes about spiritual ideas while rooting the poetry in the physical world.

Passage A

Donne lived in the age of discovery. Columbus had 'discovered' America in 1492 and by the early 16th century, Magellan had circumnavigated the globe. At the end of the 15th century, explorers were trying to find the 'Anyan Strait', a sea passage through America that would easily link Europe and China. Donne is clearly grounded in the physical world of his time as he names 'Anyan' and the 'Magellan' straits. He makes use of the fact that cartographers in this period are drawing new maps based on new discoveries and he's comparing the doctors to these explorers. Donne compares himself to a 'map...flat on this bed.'

Passage B

This poem is clearly grounded in the physical world. In his sickness, he thinks of himself as his doctors' 'map'. The word itself suggests that they are exploring his body for the cause of sickness, trying to find a route, a 'strait', which will open the way to healing, reminding us of the Age of Discovery in which he lived. On the one hand, there is nothing more physical as Donne considers specific geography, 'Pacific Sea...Jerusalem'. It is the geography of a world still being discovered in his time, implying humanity's lack of knowledge and understanding not only of the world but also of humans' frailty. There is a suggestion perhaps, that the thrill of discovery and exploration is itself limited. Yes, for England it brings empire and power but that power is also capped by human limitation.

However, he uses these physical realities in abstract ways. After all, the map is a metaphor. Moreover, the final stanzas move to something that cannot be mapped in what is, for Donne, spiritual reality rather than metaphorical conceit. Here is another Donne. Yes, there is still 'sweat' and 'blood', both physical ideas, but it is shared with the 'first' and 'last Adam' of the spiritual realm. He speaks of 'souls' and the raising and throwing down are not physical. They are spiritual, suggesting that the poems are not consistently grounded in the physical world of his time.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC > A Level English Literature > Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC > A Level English Literature > Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

SECTION: EXPLORING CONNECTIONS

EXAM LEVEL: AS/A2

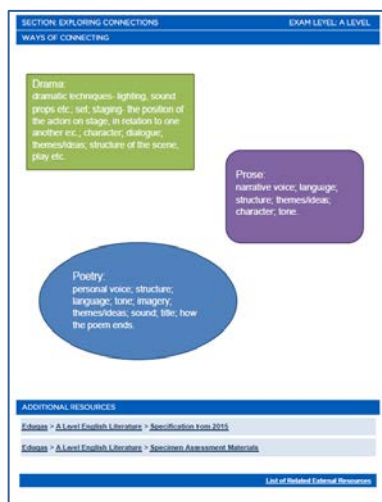
AREA OF STUDY

Making the Most of Connections

Key Points:

- Learners' expression might show the examiner that they're aware of similarities and differences between texts as they use 'signpost' phrases such as 'similarly', 'differently', 'unlike' etc.
- Teachers need to guide learners into finding similarities and differences in the ideas and attitudes considered within texts.
- Learners might find similarities and differences in the way texts have been written.
- Equal weight needs to be given to both texts and learners should take care that their coverage of the texts isn't imbalanced.
- The best responses are able to explore the **detail** as well as having an ability to compare and contrast the **overview**.

AMPLIFICATION FOR TEACHING



Considering connections:

- **Select the image (left)** for ways of connecting that learners might consider during the course.
- Ask learners to add to the list in one or all of the shapes for poetry and prose.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

Prose:

narrative voice; language; structure;
themes/ideas; character; tone.

Poetry:

personal voice; structure;
language; tone; imagery;
themes/ideas; sound; title; how
the poem ends.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

SECTION: EXPLORING CONNECTIONS

EXAM LEVEL: AS/A2

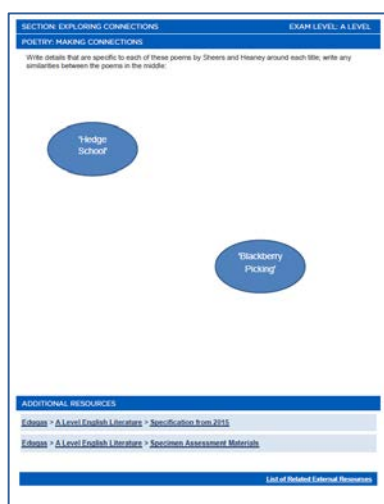
AREA OF STUDY

Poetry: Making Connections

Key Points:

- Learners will need to be able to have a confident overview of both poets but to take care not to fall into simplistic comparisons between poets' attitudes.
- Explore similarities and differences between poets and their poems continually, ensuring that learners are familiar with how the reading of one makes a difference to their reading of the other.
- The best learners manage to not only make connections between ideas and attitudes, but also to the poets' choice of language, form and structure in order to create meaning in specific poems.

INSPIRATION FOR TEACHING



Ways to make connections:

- **Select the image (left)** for an example 'double-bubble' map that can be used to compare poems or the poets in general.
- The title game: Have twelve titles of poems on the board. Learners have to consider which poet wrote which title/poem. They must justify their choices.
- Collate poems under different themes.
- Give learners a title or an idea which the poets consider and ask them to write two different poems in the style of the poets they're studying. They should explain their choices to the class.
- Start with a line or an image from both poets on the same theme/idea. Who wrote it? Learners must justify their answers.
- Place two poems side by side on an A4 sheet of paper (landscape). Learners are only allowed to make comments that explain how one poem illuminates something in the other one.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

SECTION: EXPLORING CONNECTIONS

EXAM LEVEL: AS/A2

POETRY: MAKING CONNECTIONS

Write details that are specific to each of these poems by Sheers and Heaney around each title; write any similarities between the poems in the middle:

'Hedge
School'

'Blackberry
Picking'

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

SECTION: EXPLORING CONNECTIONS

EXAM LEVEL: AS/A2

AREA OF STUDY

Prose: Making Connections

Key Points:

- Need to ensure that learners can make connections between focused detail and the overview.
- In drafting work for the non-exam assessment component, learners must be made aware that they need to balance their attention between texts.
- Learners also need to do more than state connections. The best responses always explore the similarities and differences between texts.

INSPIRATION FOR TEACHING



Possible approaches:

- Learners read two extracts from the different texts and create a double-bubble map (similar to the [poetry example](#)) to collate ideas.
- Look at the opening of both novels. How are they similar/different? Split the class into groups to look at specific detail e.g. ideas, narrative voice, language, character etc. Do the same with the ending of the novels.
- Get learners to write a passage of one novel in the style of the other writer and vice versa. Discuss decisions they made as they wrote each passage.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

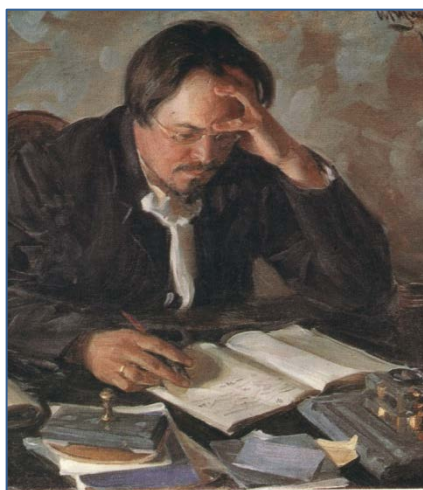
AREA OF STUDY

Getting the Basics Right

Key Points:

- The language learners use in their essays can reveal an awareness of other readings; using words such as 'suggests', 'arguably' and 'could be' can be helpful.
- Probe the text, and learners' responses to it, by ensuring rich discussion of meaning in the classroom. The learners' own ideas about how an extract or whole text can be interpreted in different ways can be useful in considering different interpretations.
- Different interpretations can be linked to critical theory such as Marxist or feminist readings, but this isn't compulsory.
- Encourage learners to engage with critical views as they read critical material (extracts, chapters or even quotations from wider texts).

AMPLIFICATION FOR TEACHING



Learners need to remember that it's not necessarily how often different interpretations are considered in an essay that matters, but the quality of the references and their exploration in light of the textual analysis.

Simply stating a different interpretation won't access the higher bands. The best candidate can explore different interpretations and consider their validity.

In the classroom, encourage learners to agree or disagree with a critical view/statement, using the text to back up their ideas.

Insist that learners argue for the view with which they initially disagree so that they become skilled at questioning others' views.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

SECTION: DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF LITERARY TEXTS

EXAM LEVEL: AS/A2

AREA OF STUDY

Possible Approaches

Key Points:

- Learners need to explore different interpretations rather than just state them.
- Guide learners to use interpretations to develop and illuminate their understanding of the text(s).
- Thinking about different interpretations is an ideal opportunity to develop independent reading. Reading and understanding critical material isn't beyond anyone and can be encouraged and taught in order to enhance learners' understanding.

AMPLIFICATION FOR TEACHING

SECTION: DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF LITERARY TEXTS

EXAM LEVEL: A LEVEL

DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS: USING CRITICAL READINGS

Read this passage from Hardy's 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles'. How do the critical quotations on the novel affect your reading of the text?

Clouds the evening and present light of the world's active hours had grown strong, she crept from under her folds of mists, and looked around her. There she perceived what had been getting on to distant sea. The plantation whom she had taken shelter ran down at this spot into a park, which ended in a farmhouse, outside the hedge being a garden. Under the trees several persons lay about, their hair and clothing drenched with blood. Some were dead, some faintly heaving a sigh, some staring up at the sky, some pulsating quickly, some convulsed, some extended out of their writhing in agony, amidst the turbulent ones whose bodies had ended during the night by the inability of nature to bear more.

Tess gazed at once the meaning of this. The birds had been driven down into this corner the day before by some shooting party, and while those that had dropped dead under the shot, or had died before nightfall, had been scattered far and carried off, many fairly unscathed birds had escaped and hidden themselves away, or crept among the thick hedges, where they had maintained their position till they grew weaker with loss of blood in the night-time, when they had taken one by one as she had heard them.

She had occasionally caught glimpses of these men in ghastly, looking over hedges, or passing through bushes, and among their guns, strongly resembled a household light in their eyes. She had seen tall, stout, and stout as this seemed just then, they were not the first all the year round, but were, in fact, quite not persons were during certain weeks of autumn and winter, when, like the inhabitants of the Many Perinck, they ran around, and made it their purpose to bring the—no less famous Northern creature, brought into being by artificial means solely to gratify these propensities—at once to unmanly and so unobscure towards their weaker fellows in Hardy's bearing family.

With the impulse of a bird who could feel for kindred sufferers as much as for herself, Tess's first thought was to put the old long birds out of their misery, and to this end with her own hands she broke the heads of as many as she could find, leaving them to be where she had found them till the gamekeepers should come—as they probably would come—no look for them a second time.

"Their deaths—its expense myself the most miserable being on earth in the light of such misery as yours!" she exclaimed, her hands trying again as she killed the next wretched "bird" out a range of body just about mid for the night, and she had finished, and I have two hands to feed and clothe me. "She was ashamed of herself for her given of the night, based on having more language than a sense of commiseration—only an arbitrary law of society which had by tradition in future."

"We confess that this is a story which, in spite of its almost unvarnished power, it is very difficult to read, because it almost every page the most intense, against the misdeeds committed by the author, and directed from the entire action of a creature on death and grief."

Richard Hook Hudson, (Gardner, 1982)

"Nothing really matters in the novel nearly as much as Tess herself, not the other characters, not the philosophical principles, not the social setting, in her relative neglect and endurance. Tess comes to seem Hardy's most radical claim for the redemptive power of suffering. Tess is one of the greatest examples we have in English literature of how a writer can take hold of a cultural stereotype and, through the sheer intensity of his affection, pure and partly in something that is morally ambivalent."

Irving Howe, (Thomas Hardy, 1998)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Home » A Level English Literature » Specification from 2015](#)

[Home » A Level English Literature » Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

[List of Related External Resources](#)

Exploring Meaning:

- Give learners an extract and two critical quotations. Ask them to analyse the text using the quotations to help them. **Select the image (left)** for example materials.
- Give learners a review from a newspaper periodical to read. Ask them to underline the three most useful sentences. Explore chosen quotations through class discussion.
- Organise learners into groups and give different groups a different card which outlines very briefly a critical view e.g. Marxist, feminist etc. Ask the groups to interpret the text/extract/poem in the light of what they've read. They then deliver their reading in a presentation to the whole class who make notes, guided by the teacher.
- For homework, give different learners different essays to read on a text and ask them to highlight key quotations that illuminate their understanding. In the classroom, discuss and collate quotations and comments so that they create their own quotation bank.
- Begin looking at an extract/poem through writing a key line/image/dialogue/ props on the board. Ask learners to consider as many meanings as possible. See how many of those fit in the context of the whole extract/poem.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC > A Level English Literature > Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC > A Level English Literature > Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS: USING CRITICAL READINGS

Read this passage from Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. How do the critical quotations on the novel affect your reading of the text?

Directly the assuring and prosaic light of the world's active hours had grown strong, she crept from under her hillock of leaves, and looked around boldly. Then she perceived what had been going on to disturb her. The plantation wherein she had taken shelter ran down at this spot into a peak, which ended it hitherward, outside the hedge being arable ground. Under the trees several pheasants lay about, their rich plumage dabbled with blood; some were dead, some feebly twitching a wing, some staring up at the sky, some pulsating quickly, some contorted, some stretched out—all of them writhing in agony, except the fortunate ones whose tortures had ended during the night by the inability of nature to bear more.

Tess guessed at once the meaning of this. The birds had been driven down into this corner the day before by some shooting-party; and while those that had dropped dead under the shot, or had died before nightfall, had been searched for and carried off, many badly wounded birds had escaped and hidden themselves away, or risen among the thick boughs, where they had maintained their position till they grew weaker with loss of blood in the night-time, when they had fallen one by one as she had heard them.

She had occasionally caught glimpses of these men in girlhood, looking over hedges, or peeping through bushes, and pointing their guns, strangely accoutred, a bloodthirsty light in their eyes. She had been told that, rough and brutal as they seemed just then, they were not like this all the year round, but were, in fact, quite civil persons save during certain weeks of autumn and winter, when, like the inhabitants of the Malay Peninsula, they ran amuck, and made it their purpose to destroy life—in this case harmless feathered creatures, brought into being by artificial means solely to gratify these propensities—at once so unmannerly and so unchivalrous towards their weaker fellows in Nature's teeming family.

With the impulse of a soul who could feel for kindred sufferers as much as for herself, Tess's first thought was to put the still living birds out of their torture, and to this end with her own hands she broke the necks of as many as she could find, leaving them to lie where she had found them till the game-keepers should come—as they probably would come—to look for them a second time.

"Poor darlings—to suppose myself the most miserable being on earth in the sight o' such misery as yours!" she exclaimed, her tears running down as she killed the birds tenderly. "And not a twinge of bodily pain about me! I be not mangled, and I be not bleeding, and I have two hands to feed and clothe me." She was ashamed of herself for her gloom of the night, based on nothing more tangible than a sense of condemnation under an arbitrary law of society which had no foundation in Nature.

"We confess that this is a story which, in spite of its almost unrivalled power, it is very difficult to read, because in almost every page the mind rebels against the steady assumptions of the author, and shrinks from the untrue picture of a universe so blank and godless..."

Richard Holt Hutton, *Spectator*, 1892

"Nothing finally matters in the novel nearly so much as Tess herself: not the other characters, not the philosophical underlay, not the social setting. In her violation, neglect and endurance, Tess comes to seem Hardy's most radical claim for the redemptive power of suffering... Tess is one of the greatest examples we have in English literature of how a writer can take hold of a cultural stereotype and, through the sheer intensity of his affection, pare and purify it into something that is morally ennobling..."

Irving Howe, *Thomas Hardy*, 1968

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

KEY ASPECTS OF THE SPECIFICATION FROM 2015

ASSESSMENT	
AREA OF STUDY	DESCRIPTION
<u>Common Problems</u>	Highlighting common problems associated with the way learners approach the different AOs.
<u>Tackling Two-part Questions</u>	Possible approaches to building the skills required to respond successfully to two-part questions.
<u>Responding to Unseen Poetry</u>	Guidelines for dealing with the unseen poetry in Unit 3.
<u>Non-exam Assessment</u>	Ensuring that teachers and learners are clear about the demands of Unit 5 and guidance for building helpful tasks for learners.

Key Points:

- Candidates need to be made aware of the different AOs at an early stage.
- For each unit and each section, there should be a sound understanding of the weighting of the AOs examined.
- Balancing the AOs is vital with the analysis of the text being central.
- The most sophisticated responses can work on a number of AOs at the same time.

AO1

- Poor structure or organisation: focus too broad so trying to cover too much ground; shaky paragraphing; favouring one text.
- Lack of textual knowledge and overview of the whole text affects the quality of creative engagement.
- Not always relevant use of terminology.
- Poor proofreading affecting technical accuracy.

AO2

- Commentary of meaning rather than analysis of how the use of language, form and structure conveys meaning.
- Asserted ideas: insufficient support or lack of development of ideas.
- Approaching characters as real people rather than literary constructs.
- Feature-spotting.

AO3

- Context-led responses with the text used as illustration.
- Sweeping generalisations.
- Perils of biographical reading: conflating writer and characters/narrator.

Continued on next page

[WJEC](#) > [A level English Literature](#) > [Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC](#) > [A level English Literature](#) > [Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

Common Problems

COMMON PROBLEMS LINKED TO ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES (CONTINUED)

AO4

- Poor balance between texts.
- Making too many superficial or undeveloped links: assertion; loss of clear focus on task.
- Relying too heavily on contextual links rather than solidly literary connections.

AO5

- Using poor quality web-based sources: encourages commentary and loss of focus; serious danger of plagiarism.
- Failing to engage with the different interpretation quoted/referenced.
- Quoting too much material from other readers leaving too little space for AO2.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC](#) > [A level English Literature](#) > [Specification from 2015](#)

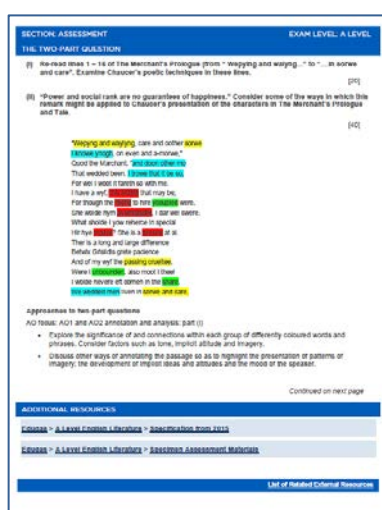
[WJEC](#) > [A level English Literature](#) > [Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

Tackling Two-part Questions

Key Points:

- Tackling the two-part question is a skill that learners need to develop in order to respond confidently in a number of different components.
- Although there is a link between the two parts, candidates shouldn't be covering the same ground in the second part of the question.
- Continually setting exercises and tasks that reflect the two-part structure will be essential for success.

INSPIRATION FOR TEACHING



The screenshot shows a section of an assessment paper titled 'SECTION: ASSESSMENT' and 'EXAM LEVEL: A LEVEL'. It contains a 'TWO-PART QUESTION' with two parts. Part (i) asks candidates to read lines 1-14 of Macbeth's Prologue and identify poetic techniques. Part (ii) asks candidates to consider the ways in which the text might be applied to a character's presentation. Below the questions, there is a list of 'Related External Resources' including 'A Level English Literature - Macbeth', 'A Level English Literature - Macbeth Assessment Materials', and 'List of Related External Resources'.

Approaches to Two-part Questions:

- The first part can work as a springboard for the second part as there is a connection in thought between them.
- One 'bridging' sentence might be useful for candidates as they start on the second part of the question.
- Candidates won't be penalised for not making a link between the first and second parts of the question.
- After looking at an extract in the classroom, candidates can suggest their own ideas for questions which could be asked about the whole text, in the light of their initial analysis.
- **Select the image (left)** for example materials, activities and ideas linked to ways to approach the two-part question.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

THE TWO-PART QUESTION

Read the extract below from Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and answer the questions which follow.

I went to my window, opened it, and looked out. There were the two wings of the building; there was the garden; there were the skirts of Lowood; there was the hilly horizon. My eye passed all other objects to rest on those most remote, the blue peaks; it was those I longed to surmount; all within their boundary of rock and heath seemed prison-ground, exile limits. I traced the white road winding round the base of one mountain, and vanishing in a gorge between two. How I longed to follow it farther!

I recalled the time when I had travelled that very road in a coach; I remembered descending that hill at twilight. An age seemed to have elapsed since the day which brought me first to Lowood, and I had never quitted it since. My vacations had all been spent at school. Mrs. Reed had never sent for me to Gateshead; neither she nor any of her family had ever been to visit me. I had had no communication by letter or message with the outer world: school-rules, school-duties, school-habits and notions, and voices, and faces, and phrases, and costumes, and preferences, and antipathies: such was what I knew of existence. And now I felt that it was not enough. I tired of the routine of eight years in one afternoon. I desired liberty; for liberty I gasped; for liberty I uttered a prayer; it seemed scattered on the wind then faintly blowing. I abandoned it and framed a humbler supplication. For change, stimulus. That petition, too, seemed swept off into vague space: "Then," I cried, half desperate, "grant me at least a new servitude!"

(i) Examine Brontë's presentation of Jane's state of mind in this extract.

[20]

(ii) "The strongest message of this novel is that females, however determined, can never be completely free." In the light of this statement, discuss Brontë's presentation of the theme of freedom. In your response, you must make close reference to at least two other parts of *Jane Eyre*.

[40]

Approaches to two-part questions

AO focus: AO1 and AO2 annotation and analysis: part (i)

- Explore the significance of and connections within each group of differently coloured words and phrases. Consider factors such as tone, implicit attitude and imagery.
- Discuss other ways of annotating the passage so as to highlight the presentation of patterns of imagery; the development of implicit ideas and attitudes and the mood of the speaker.

Continued on next page

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

THE TWO-PART QUESTION

(i) Examine Brontë's presentation of Jane's state of mind in this extract.

[20]

(ii) "The strongest message of this novel is that females, however determined, can never be completely free." In the light of this statement, discuss Brontë's presentation of the theme of freedom. In your response, you must make close reference to at least two other parts of *Jane Eyre*. [40]

Bridging parts (i) and (ii)

- Ask the class to identify quickly any ideas they have absorbed from Brontë's use of language in answering part (i) which may be relevant to part (ii).
- Choose pairs of students to identify which assessment objectives are being addressed in each element of the part (ii) question.
- Each pair should then select evidence from the text to develop their response, particularly in respect of the contextual and critical focus points of the question.
- Taking account of further relevant contexts and critical views (AO3 and AO5), responses should develop (AO1) beyond the passage in part (i) and cover a range of material throughout the novel (AO2).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

SECTION: ASSESSMENT

EXAM LEVEL: AS/A2

AREA OF STUDY

Responding to Unseen Poetry

Key Points:

- Learners are required to respond to **one** question requiring a comparative analysis of **two** poems taken from any period: one **compulsory** poem or poetry extract and another chosen from a further **three poems** or poetry extracts.
- Assessment will be based on AO1, AO2 and AO4.
- Practice is essential. Learners need to read a range of poetry and grow accustomed to writing on poems under timed conditions.

AMPLIFICATION FOR TEACHING

SECTION: DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF LITERARY TEXTS

EXAM LEVEL: A LEVEL

DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS: USING CRITICAL READINGS

Read this passage from Hardy's 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles'. How do the critical quotations on the novel affect your reading of the text?

Clouds the assuring and promise light of the world's active hours had given strong, she crept from under her "house of leaves, and closed around herself. There she remained, after her long going on to distant her. The plantation wherein she had taken shelter ran down at this spot into a peak, which ended in a high tower, whence the hedge being visible around. Under the trees several characters lay about, their rich garments discoloured with blood; some were dead, some feebly twitching a wing, some staring up at the sky, some pulsating quail, some contracted, some stretched out, all of them lying in agony, amidst the foliage and vines which had ended during the night by the inability of nature to bear more.

Tess gazed at once the meaning of this. The birds had been driven down into this corner the day before by some shooting party, and while those that had dropped dead under the shot, or had died before nightfall, had been scattered for and carried off, many feebly fluttered down and nestled themselves away, or crept among the thick bushes, where they had maintained their position till they grew weaker with loss of blood in the night time, when they had taken refuge by one as she had never been.

She had unconsciously caught glimpses of these men in grimaces, looking over hedges, or passing through bushes, and pointing their guns, strangely recollected a bloodstained light in their eyes. She had been told that, rough and brutal as they seemed just then, they were not the first at all (but the last), but were, in fact, gentle and peaceful men during certain weeks of autumn and winter, when, like the inhabitants of the Malay Peninsula, they ran amuck, and made it their purpose to destroy the—in this case harmless d'Urbervilles, brought into being by artificial means solely to gratify these propensities—at once so unmanly and so unchristian towards their weaker fellows in Nature's leaving hand.

With the impulse of a soul who could feel for isolated sufferers as much as for herself, Tess's first thought was to put the still living birds out of their tortures, and to this end with her own hands she broke the necks of as many as she could find, leaving them to be where she had found them till the gamekeepers should come—as they probably would come—no lack for them a second time.

"Your feelings—do suppose myself the most miserable being on earth in the light of such misery as yours!" she exclaimed, as she turned away, as the sun shone, "and now a hedge of brambles and about me! I am the most miserable and the most miserable, and I have no hands to hold and make me. I am now contented to be left for her given of the night, based on nothing more tangible than a sense of condemnation under an arbitrary law of society which had no foundation in Nature."

"We consider that this is a story which, in spite of its almost unmitigated power, is a very difficult to read, because in almost every page the main subject against the already assumptions of the author, and shows from the very picture of a creature on death and grief."

Richard Hook Hobbs, *Speculator*, 1892

"Nothing really matters in the novel nearly as much as 'Tess herself' not the other characters, not the philosophical analysis, not the social setting, in her isolation, neglect and endurance. Tess comes to mean Hardy's most radical poem for the redemptive power of suffering. Tess is one of the greatest examples we have in English literature of how a writer can take hold of a subject and make it, through the sheer intensity of the affliction, pure and partly of the something that is morally essential."

Irving Howe, *Thomas Hardy*, 1980

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[A Level English Literature - Specimen from 2015](#)

[A Level English Literature - Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

[List of Related External Resources](#)

- Engaged, analytical writing with due attention to relevant connections between texts will be rewarded.
- A misinterpretation would be to construct lists of points of contact between texts in an effort to earn 30 marks; connections can only become valid when they are based on an analysis of both texts.
- Perhaps it would be better to make a few worthwhile and fully-developed connections between the poems, rather than asserting links or trying to cover too many points so that connections are superficial. Quality is more important than quantity.
- Click on the image (left)** for further guidance on preparing for Unit 3, Section B.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC > A Level English Literature > Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC > A Level English Literature > Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

Build on poetry analysis and comparison skills gained from AS and A level set poetry texts

Department prepares **anthology**:

- Text books
- Past papers
- Printed anthologies

Experience

Candidates read set poem each fortnight as preparation for 15 minute discussion

Developing **connecting skills**:

- Comparison
- Contrast
- Illumination

Annotation skills

Timed annotation practice

Share with class

Timing skills

Timed writing practice

Peer/teacher assessment

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

Non-exam Assessment: Getting the Basics Right

Key Points:

- The ethos of the specification is one that encourages learners' independent learning and study. Part of that independence can be seen in the non-exam assessment.
- Texts studied elsewhere in the specification cannot be repeated.
- Even where teachers are reticent to give learners complete freedom in their choice of texts, it would be beneficial for learners to choose their own focus for study, based on their personal engagement with their texts.
- In light of that, teachers can encourage learners to choose from a range of tasks.
- Teachers must also guide learners towards texts that have an appropriate degree of substance and challenge, ensure that they're taken from the correct periods (one pre-2000, one post-2000).
- Although the 2500-3500 word count is a guideline, learners should be aware that they can punish themselves if they don't adhere to it.
- It is the teacher's responsibility to make sure that tasks, texts and word counts are appropriate.

AMPLIFICATION FOR TEACHING



Task-setting:

- **Select the image (left)** for further task-setting guidance and an example task mapped to the Assessment Objectives.
- The task must be manageable in the word limit.
- Tasks should reflect the equal weighting of the texts by making it clear that both texts should be considered in detail. It might be appropriate to include a steer such as "compare and contrast" or "make productive and illuminating connections between the texts where relevant".
- Tasks should give candidates opportunities to discuss the significance of relevant contextual factors on the writing of the texts and on reader response (AO3). However, centres must take care not to invite candidates to take a context-led approach, keeping literary response to the fore.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

Further Guidance for Task-setting:

- Use a carefully chosen viewpoint in the title as a starting point. This could be broadly thematic, linked to genre or a critical view of one or both of the texts. This is obviously a good way to address AO5 as candidates can engage with the view.
- Encourage a literary approach to the texts. Steer them towards close analysis of language, form and structure so that AO2 drives the response rather than AO3; candidates must engage directly with the writers' techniques, rather than seeing the texts as illustrations of broad context.
- A good way to remind learners that they are being tasked with critical appreciation of the texts is using terms such as:
 "Analyse how the writers present/portray...";
 "Explore the presentation of...";
 "Discuss how the writers' use of..."

- **As it stands, the task below is *not* worded in a way to help candidates address the AOs:**

Consider society's attitudes to women in Sebastian Barry's *The Secret Scripture* and in Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*.

What are the problems here? Can you improve this task?

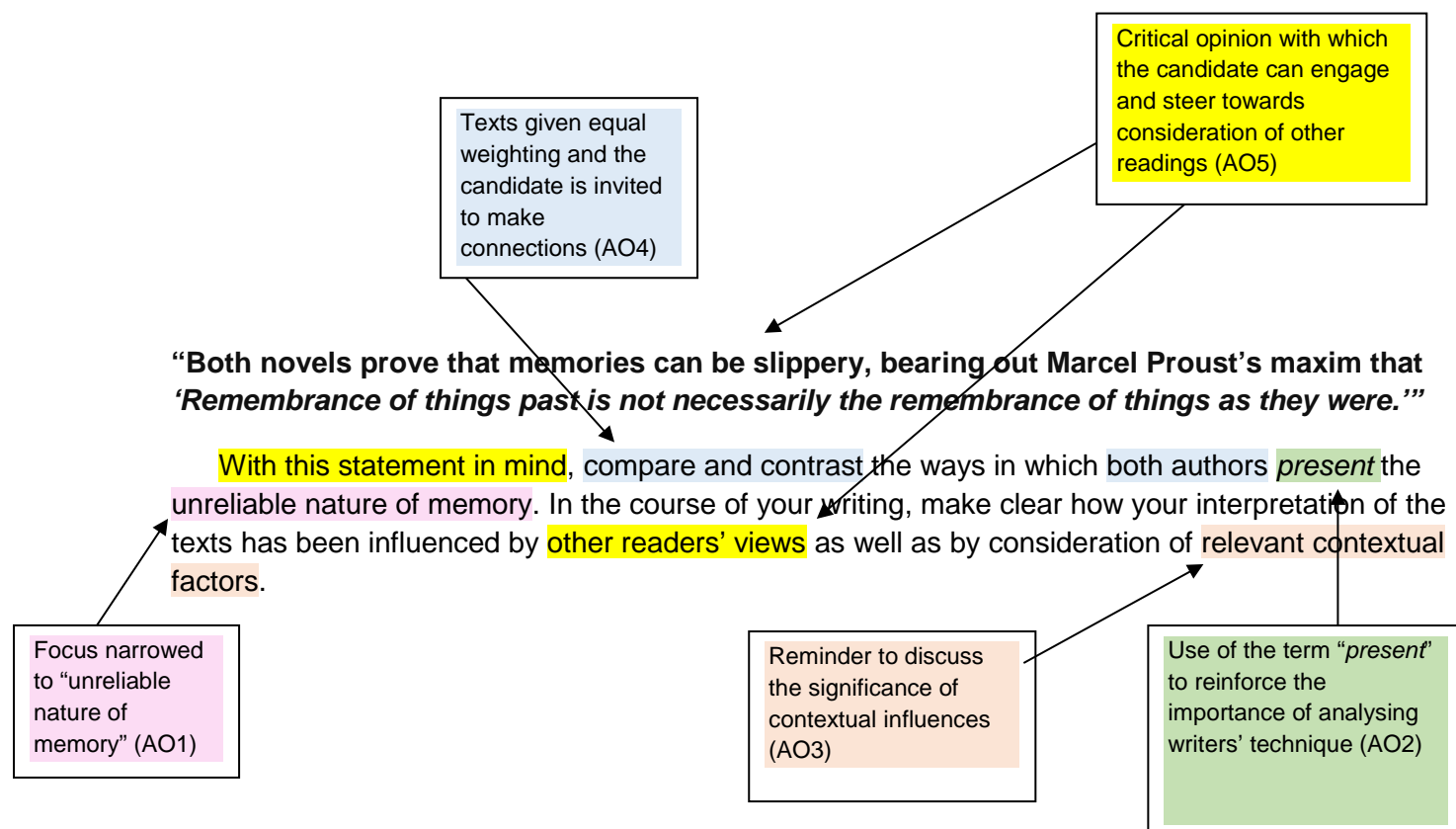
On the next page you will find an example task mapped to the Assessment Objectives.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specimen Assessment Materials](#)

Further Guidance for Task-setting: Example Task



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specification from 2015](#)

[WJEC](#) > [A Level English Literature](#) > [Specimen Assessment Materials](#)