

WJEC EDUQAS A LEVEL ENGLISH LITERATURE EXEMPLAR MATERIAL

The following responses will hopefully give centres some guidance on how to approach the examinations in the summer.

The following should be considered however:

- these are only examples of approaches to tasks which we've received and should not be viewed as a template; other approaches are valid and will be rewarded by examiners
- responses were not necessarily completed under the same timed conditions as an examination.

Thank you to all centres and candidates who have shared work in order to make this document possible.

Component 1 Section A

Specimen Q 4.

(i) Re-read La Belle Dame Sans Merci on page 184. Explore Keats' use of imagery in this poem.

4) It is clear that setting is significant in Keats' creation of imagery, as we are immediately introduced to a desolate wasteland, where plant life has withered and no birds sing. This dark setting that Keats has created is suggested in the first stanza and introduces a sense of pessimism and desperation, based around the 'knight-at-arms' reinforced by the repetition of the first line 'Oh, what can ail thee' painting a picture of vulnerability.

Confident engagement (AO1)

Sound analysis of implicit meaning (AO2)

As we continue, we see Keats' engagement with flowers to create this imagery, suggested by the beginning of the third stanza - "I see a lilly on thy brow" alludes to his paleness but also emphasises his weakness, as a 'lilly' is often symbolic of death and so can reflect his 'withering' state, adding to the deathly feel of the poem. This contrasts to the following metaphor "jading rose" which can be representative of love and beauty and suggests this loss of youth in such sinister surroundings. Keats' creation of uncertainty can be considered characteristic of the Romantics drawing the reader into the ballad as the narration continues. The cold and isolated setting that Keats initially illustrated, strongly contrasts to that of the fourth stanza onwards - "I met a lady in the meads" suggests association with warmth and perhaps summer. His idealistic description of the 'lady' is characteristic of the genre, describing her as "full beautiful" and "a faery's child" painting a mysterious yet enchanting image. We get a grim impression on her seductive nature from the line "And her eyes were wild". ✓

Secure grasp of technique/implicit meaning (AO2)

Thoughtful
engagement
(AO1)

As the narrator continues, we get the impression that the described world is enchanting, as he lists, "sweet relish, and honey wild." This can suggest she has enthralled him. However, we soon see the clash of two contrasts in setting coming together, as we imagine the brightness and beauty fading "the cold hill's side", which could suggest the narrator has been plunged from fantasy or reality, or perhaps the knight has escaped the superficial paradise that "La Belle Dame" had created, which paints an almost predatory setting, of man falling into trap.

Sound
analysis
of
imagery
(AO2)

The eleventh stanza introduces violent and aggressive imagery of 'starv'd lips', 'horrid' and 'gaped wide', which can reinforce the destruction of the knight's memories or fantasy as it crumbles around him, forcing him to transition ~~back~~ back to reality. The final repeated line "And no birds sing" give the impression that there has been no change, which perhaps creates the image of a lost knight, in a dreamlike state.

Well argued (AO1)

Principal's comments

AO1

Ambitious writing - closely engaged and becoming perceptive at times. Take care though - no need to discuss genre context/period here.

Low Band 5

AO2

Just a little more exploration needed at times - why does "sweet relish and honey wild" suggest the knight is enthralled? Half a sentence would do it. Sound and accurate analysis but slightly vague points in conclusion.

Band 4

Specimen Q 12.

How far would you agree that Larkin and Duffy are alike in "creating characters to hide from or confront issues"? You must analyse in detail at least two poems from each of your set texts.

Purposeful link (AO4)

Engages with task (AO1)

Duffy and Larkin are alike in confronting issues of established tradition, suggested by 'Havisham' and 'Self & the Man', creating a character that demonstrates weakness in confronting issues. Themes of isolation and loneliness are central to 'Mr. Bleaney' by Larkin, a poem which establishes a character locked out of ordinary life, through switches in narration. Despite Mr. B being the central character, we find the second narrator struggles to confront issues, suggested by the line "I lay where Mr. Bleaney lay" as he begins to evaluate his own life in

Sound grasp of implied meaning (AO2)

comparison to his. Larkin's presentation of the room as "one hired box" can be likened to a form of imprisonment or the barrier restricting Mr. B from confronting his issues, which can be viewed as not living a fulfilled life or living up to stereotype. This could perhaps be a reflection of Larkin's life, living solitarily, choosing not to marry and have a family, however the poem could alternatively be viewed as a representation of Larkin's regret as he shows some

Some connection to poet's life (AO3)

evaluation of life, perhaps of his own - dignified by the line "he warranted no better. I don't know."

It is considerable that the second narrator does show the ability to confront issues, using Mr. B's life as a depiction of their problems - "how we live measures our nature" introduces a sense of realisation and reality. Larkin's frequent use of small detail, such as "flowered curtains, thin and preysed" can be considered a method to distract or hide from the internal issues of the character or Larkin - Mr Bleaney and

Evaluates technique (AO2)

the room could be related to Larkin and Hull, creating the same feeling or effect, influencing his literary style.

Secure link (AO4)

In contrast, the poem 'Havisham' by Duffy, whilst exploring themes of alienation, presents a wild and outcast character, ostracized through

Relevant focus/sound terminology (AO1)

stereotype. Her constant switch between hiding from and confronting issues, can be illustrated by the beginning Oxymoron of the poem "beloved sweetheart bastard", which can suggest that whilst the character confronts their issues through anger and betrayal, they hold onto a lost love.

~~Relevant~~ The way Duffy brands the narrator "spinster", gives us the impression that she looks upon her abandoned state with disgust showing some acknowledgement of their issues, and that

Purposeful (AO4)

similar to Mr. Bleakley, the room has aged and withered with the character. However, the line "the

dress yellowing" could suggest the narrator's refusal to take off her dress shows her inability to

let go of the past, and that "love's hate behind a white veil" has allowed her to hide from

her damaged identity. Duffy writing about an outraged and abandoned bride supports the notion

A little unclear (AO1)

that she writes against tradition, as she gives an alternative interpretation on an independent

woman outside the nature of tradition, which is significant given the Catholic values that Duffy was brought up on, where marriage would

be seen as a requirement. This can support the connection between Larkin and Duffy,

with a voice locked out of normal life being the common motif.

Sound link (AO4)

This bitter sense and envy is also present in Larkin's 'Self's the man', in which the narrator's evaluation of Arnold's life is used to mask the emptiness of his own. Repetition of the first line "Oh, no one can deny, that Arnold is less selfish than I" gives the impression that the narrator attempts to convince himself that his life is of better value than Arnold's, as again we see evaluation of life as a common motif between Larkin and Duffy. This method of analysing another's life to give perspective on the narrator's current position is also present in Duffy's 'Captain of the 1964 Top of the Form Team' supporting the statement that they are alike in creating character's hiding from or confronting issues. ~~The~~ Larkin's use of rhyming couplets adopts a playful and mocking tone, but overtime he becomes superficial and desperate, creating the narrator's persona as a detached observer, unaccepted by the traditional nature of living. This could be interpreted as Larkin's lack of appreciation for ~~the~~ stereotypical family life, however undertones of loss and loneliness can be considered at the root of his issues - we see his confidence waver, signalled by the conjunctive "but" at the beginning of the sixth stanza. Despite the simplistic and colloquial tone, that Larkin adopts throughout, the line "Is there such a contrast?" suggests the narrator's search for clarity, similar to in

Clearly informed (AO1)

Sound analysis (AO2)

'Mr. Bleasby' where the narrator to an extent, does not understand their own character and that whilst Arnold's life has been 'restricted' by marriage, selfishness has blinded the narrator to ~~the~~ confront his issues of isolation and superiority. This can be further supported by Rankin's use of one, first person narrator, almost as though there is no room for another voice in his life. This could perhaps relate to Rankin's endeavor for inspiration independently, as displayed in "The Whitlur Weddings" - watching others to gain an outlook, just as in the poem.

Understands contextual links (AO3)

Nevertheless, Duffy has created an obnoxious and arrogant character in "The Captain of the 1964 Top of the Farm Team" in which we see a narrator in denial of the inevitability of time and what it will bring, using again, stereotypical family life, suggested by "stale wife", "thick kids" as a scapegoat for his jail-ner. Duffy's twists in time, venturing between the narrator's past and memories to present day, suggests the narrator's inability to address their issue of loss and disappointment, perhaps marked by the egotistical persona that Duffy has created. It is considerable that Duffy's use of short sentences - "I want it back. The Captain. The one with all the answers" creates a disappointed effect, showing the impact of time on the narrator, which could relate to the title of the book itself 'Mean Time' - with age comes a loss

Secure support (AO2)

Structure (AO2)

Implicit meaning (AO2)

of youthful fortune. The regretful tone created can be considered similar to that of 'Self's the man', however they both pose differing views on stereotypical family life, this poem suggesting that the narrator has fallen short ~~of the established tradition~~ ~~again~~ ~~reflecting~~ ~~their~~ ~~personal~~ ~~views~~, ~~particularly~~, again suggesting Duffy's writing against established tradition as she presents marriage as an institution that doesn't live up to its standards, despite the value she was brought up on. Both poets use established tradition to confront the emptiness of the created character's life, marriage and relationships being a common barrier from allow the narrator to acknowledge their problems.

Secure connection (AO4)

Well organised (AO1)

In conclusion, I do agree with the statement that both Duffy and Rankin create characters alike in struggling to confront their issues, however in the explored poems, we do see a development of the detached persona in recognising their issues, for example the phrase "I want it back" in 'COT 1964 TOTFF' suggests the narrator admits their ~~own~~ internal issues which they have attempted to hide from. Nevertheless, we see a ~~strongly~~ metaphorical journey in the ^{alike} characters, that both poets' have created, often relating back to their past

Principal's comments

AO1 (10)

Some confident writing which engages with the ideas and form of the poems. Some evidence of an academic style. (Band 4)

AO2 (20)

Some secure grasp of implicit meaning and poetic techniques. (Band 4)

AO3 (10)

Superficial refs to poets' lives and some implicit ideas contained in use of "traditional" and stereotypes provide some evidence but not enough to get beyond Low Band 2

AO4 (10)

Sound, secure and purposeful links. (Band 4)

AO5 (10)

Very little evidence – needs to be more explicit (Low Band 2)

Component 2 Section A

Specimen Q. 1 (i)

With close reference to the language and imagery in this passage, examine how Shakespeare presents Lear's state of mind.

Secure, sound terms (AO1)

The state of mind of the eponymous protagonist King Lear is presented by Shakespeare as enraged, however this fury distorts his judgement to the extent of misogyny. A line which encapsulates this is "thou art a boil...in my corrupted blood", emphasising Lear's anger after being rejected by his daughters, specifically Goneril. Here, Shakespeare's use of pestilential imagery with the noun "boil" highlights Lear's vituperative anger through the vicious nature of his insult. Furthermore, the adjective "corrupted" suggests that Lear believes his daughters to be a disease-like infliction that has tainted his "blood", and Lear's antagonised state of mind is encapsulated by Shakespeare through the indignation in his tone. It must be noted that this connection between women and disease is deeply misogynistic. Perhaps Lear's turbulent state of mind is presented by Shakespeare to be a result of betrayal. One could infer the callousness of Lear's insult to reflect a sense of vulnerability due to the corrosion of the familial social contract that occurred when Goneril rejected him and his knights. If it weren't for his associations between femininity and disease, Shakespeare's desperate tone may have invoked a sense of pathos within the audience due to Lear's heightened state of emotion. Subsequently, Shakespeare presents Lear's state of mind to be both vulnerable and wrathful as a result of his daughters' rejection.

Sound analysis (AO2)

Creatively engaged (AO1)

Furthermore, Lear's state of mind is presented as increasingly susceptible to madness, and this is conveyed in Shakespeare's blank verse in "No, rather I abjure all roofs, and choose // To wage against the enmity o' th'air". Lear's statement to "abjure all roofs" is hyperbolic, and his choice to be vulnerable rather than sacrifice his pride may be interpreted as a reflection of his insanity. Lear's rejection of "roofs" does not just encapsulate his decision to leave the home of his daughter, but also how he distanced himself from ownership of all property and shelter through his rash decision to give up the kingdom. Through this, Shakespeare arguably depicts Lear as foolish, and one may infer that this only furthers the notion that his state of mind is deteriorating into madness. Shakespeare's use of caesura isolates the aforementioned phrase, and this perhaps reflects Lear's feelings of alienation from his family and the rest of the kingdom, and how his possible madness contributes to his fall from grace (which in turn reflects a wider tragic tradition). The corrosion of the stability of his mind, and of Lear's judgment, is thus encapsulated by Shakespeare through his lines of blank verse, emphasising his foolish decision making and hyperbolic claims.

Academic style and register (AO1)
Secure analysis of how meaning is shaped (AO2)

Principal's Comments

AO1

Clearly informed, engaged and well-structured response with clear knowledge of the extract. Sound use of concepts and apt terminology. Accurate, clear expression with evidence of an academic style and register.

Band 4

AO2

Sound, accurate analysis of selected features, with generally apt support and a secure grasp of implicit meaning.

Band 4

Specimen Q 1 (ii)

Consider the view that Shakespeare's presentation of personal and political power in *King Lear* has universal interest and relevance.

AO1
Engages
with task.
Secure
overview

Personal and political power is apparent throughout Shakespeare's tragedy *King Lear*, and some may argue that these themes of authority and dominance transcend the bounds of the Jacobean era and hold universal relevance. Shakespeare presents this by exploring the political power of the monarchy, conflict within intergenerational divisions, the potency of patriarchal power, and the struggle of retaining power over one's mental state.

AO2
Sound,
close and
accurate
analysis

Shakespeare's presentation of power perhaps is mostly conveyed in the form of royal authority, and the hyper masculine potency of absolute rule. The initial royal power of the eponymous protagonist King Lear is encompassed in Shakespeare's line of blank verse: "Come not between the dragon and his wrath". Here, the fantastical imagery associated with the metaphor of Lear being a "dragon" conveys how Lear views himself to have power that extends beyond human capabilities, reflecting the hubristic behaviour that triggers his downfall. Shakespeare's use of blank verse creates a rhythm that makes Lear's enraged statement seem almost majestic, yet again enforcing the potency of royal power. With this in light, it's arguable that Shakespeare presents political power to reflect the divine right of kings, reflecting the wider view in the Jacobean era that royals were chosen by god. Whilst this is generally not believed in modern Western societies, some may contend that modern society is still an oligarchy, and across the world tyrannical governments still present themselves to have power that is almost divine (such as in North Korea), suggesting that the presence of absolute power in the tragedy is still universally relevant. Marxist critics may object to the fact that going against the wills of the powerful should be punished with "wrath", and may argue that although monarchy (specifically England) holds no real political power, challenging the authority of the powerful is still difficult within current political systems. However, audiences may find his statement largely ironic: Lear's wrath leads to nothing but his downfall, and his almost religious power corrodes until it becomes obsolete. Perhaps Shakespeare intended to convey that absolute power is largely a facade. Subsequently, through the hyperbolic presentation of Lear's authority Shakespeare constructs royal power to be absolute but largely empty, yet the potency of the monarchy has universal interest and relevance as it is a political system still in use across the world today.

AO3
Range of
contexts
AO1
Engaged
and
thoughtful

AO5
Clear and
appropriate use
of other
interpretations

The turbulent world of Iron Age Britain is imagined to be a huge struggle for political power, specifically between the young and old. This is encapsulated in "The younger rises when the old doth fall". Such a threatening line of blank verse, spoken by Edmund in Act 3 Scene 4, encapsulates a generational conflict that causes societal fractures in both the subplot, with Edmund and Gloucester, and the main plot, with Lear, Goneril and Regan. To use rhyming iambic pentameter would have been more in accordance with the literary conventions of previous years (prior to playwrights like Christopher Marlowe), and by using blank verse Shakespeare's meter deviates from older lyrical tradition, much like Edmund turned away from desired to reclaim society from the shackles of "aged tyranny". Indeed, Shakespeare's use of the verbs "rises" and "falls" convey the fluidity of the possession of power, thus demonstrating how, in tragedy, authority is rarely secure. Edmund's certain tone creates a sense of foreboding, and this reflects an arguably revolutionary desire within the young to dismantle the power of their predecessors. Twenty first century audiences may think this concept universal as intergenerational conflict is arguably still present in modern political and social climates. In this regard, Shakespeare's presentation of intergenerational conflict over power is of universal interest as it is a theme that transcends the constraints of his narrative, and is apparent throughout history.

AO3 understanding
and appreciation of
contexts

AO2
Structure and
form
considered

AO3 audience
reception

The oppressive power of the patriarchy within Shakespeare's presentation of 8th century BC society is apparent across the whole tragedy, and is a force that is of universal relevance across history. After Cordelia

AO3
attempts
to link
texts and
contexts

refuses to partake in the love test, Lear states "But now her price is fallen.", and this remark encapsulates the power of patriarchy within the tragedy. Here, Shakespeare's use of "price" connotes materialism and possession, and audiences may find this to be subversive of traditional familial values: instead of cherishing his daughter, Lear treats her as if she were his property. It's arguable that, through "price", Shakespeare uses capitalistic imagery that associates people with wealth and investment rather than personal value. The fact that Lear has the ability to dictate the worth of his daughter immediately suggests that men hold extreme power over women, and feminist critics would heavily condemn such a statement. Women have often been considered the property of their fathers and male family members across history, specifically in the 17th Century when the play was written, highlighted by the fact that fathers paid a dowry when their daughters wed. The potency of misogyny has universal relevance as many feminist critics would contend that the devaluing and dehumanisation of women is apparent in modern society. Whilst Lear is characterised to possess "hideous rashness", something that may explain the callousness of his remark, Shakespeare's tragedy does not seem to condemn such misogyny as Goneril and Regan, women who resist patriarchal oppression, are vilified, and every female character is dead by the play's denouement. Ultimately, Shakespeare presents Lear to have both personal and political power over his daughters, and as a whole the power of patriarchy within the tragedy is not isolated as a fictitious feature of the narrative, but rather extends into both the societies of modern audiences and Shakespeare's contemporaries.

AO2 &
AO3

AO1
Academic style
and register

AO1 Creative
engagement

One of the most interesting struggles for power within the tragedy is arguably the loss of Lear's control over his mental state, and it results with Lear entering the realms of insanity by the end of the play. The Fool's remark that "This cold night will turn us all to fools and madmen" embodies the struggle for personal power over one's mind and a transition into madness. Whilst the "cold night" is a reference to the storm that Lear, Edgar, Kent and the Fool were stuck in, it is perhaps metaphoric for the isolation and vulnerability that ultimately triggered Lear's madness, and is perhaps analeptic of how Lear isolated himself with his foolish actions such as the love test. The certainty created with the verb "will" perhaps suggests that Shakespeare presents Lear to possess no control over his sanity. In this regard, Lear has lost power over himself; to a wider level humanity as a whole (encompassed by "all") is susceptible to the callous effects of exposure and isolation. This may resonate with twenty first century audiences as mental illness is on the rise, and this makes the theme of mental instability, and Lear's inability to gain personal power over his own mind, of universal interest as it is not a theme that exists only within the tragedy. Therefore, Shakespeare's depictions of Lear's loss of power over his own mind reflect a universal concern over mental health that would perhaps be of more of an interest to modern audiences rather than Shakespeare's contemporaries.

AO1 AO2
Selective, apt
support

AO2
Close
analysis of
language

Ultimately, Shakespeare depicts political power to be a largely oppressive source of conflict, and personal power through Lear's increasing loss of control over his mind. Shakespeare's presentation of this explores themes that exist outside the constraints of his tragedy, and therefore are of universal relevance as they resonate with audiences outside of the 17th century.

Principal's Comments

AO1

Clearly informed, engaged and well-structured response with clear knowledge of the play. Sound use of concepts and apt terminology. Accurate, clear expression with evidence of an academic style and register.

Band 4

AO2

Sound, accurate analysis of language and techniques, with selective, apt support and a secure grasp of implicit meaning.

Band 4

AO3

Sound, secure appreciation and understanding of contexts and the link between texts and contexts. Band 4

AO5

Makes some clear and appropriate use of other possible interpretations.

Band 3

Component 2 Section B

Specimen question 8

How far would you agree that Webster and Williams are alike in “creating settings and locations which speak volumes about social attitudes” in *The Duchess of Malfi* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*?

Trialled response

Both Webster and Williams use deliberate settings and locations to portray certain themes in their plays and also to give them appropriate context. Webster uses the setting of Italy for political reasons, and to perhaps allow the audience to be more comfortable with the controversial scenes in his play, whereas Williams uses the setting of post-war New Orleans to portray the lifestyle of its inhabitants, and subsequently the lifestyle of his main characters. However, it can also be argued that Williams' use of setting is more personal, and tends to reflect the attitudes of his individual characters, rather than the whole of society.

Attempts to make connections AO4

'A Streetcar Named Desire' is set in post-war New Orleans and is a typical cosmopolitan city. The people are integrated, and live more carefree lives; this is one of the few cities in America that became more accepting of the African Americans after the Second World War. This is shown by Williams through the use of the Negro Woman at the beginning of the play, as it suggests that she is a common figure in life in this city, and is just one of the normal people; she is not seen as very different. However, she also provides a point of contrast in her interactions with Blanche, who lived in the south of the USA, where racism was generally more prevalent. Blanche is obviously uncomfortable with the Negro Woman, shown through her surprise that her sister lives at the address she arrives at, in the company of the woman. In general, Blanche's unease in this setting implies the different attitudes to class and race that were evident in America at Williams' time of writing. Blanche sits "stiffly" in Stella's apartment, and while this can be seen as being due to her traumatic experiences that led her to this point, it must also be due to the completely foreign environment that she finds herself in.

Addresses context A03 and connects with text

AO2 support

Webster does use the same device of the setting in Italy, in "The Duchess of Malfi" which does bring with it religious and cultural connotations, yet he also perhaps uses it as a political device, by which he can distance himself from the writing. This would be especially important, as throughout the play, and even in Antonio's opening remarks, Webster condemns the corruption in the court, that, had it been set in England, could be directly linked to Webster's treason and he would have been in danger. As mentioned, Antonio answers Delio's questions about his views on the court in general, by saying "a prince's court is like a common fountain" and continues that one drop of poison can spread throughout the kingdom. This could be interpreted as a metaphor, for Antonio implying that one corrupt person in a court can go on to corrupt and damage an entire nation. It is likely that Webster intended this effect, as it provides a foreshadowing of the later corruption that in the end, leads to the death of all but the Duchess' eldest son. This attitude may have been held by Webster himself, and certainly others in England at the time, due to the speculated corruption in James I's court, with rumours of his homosexual activity. Also, the Italian setting bears connotations of a heavy Catholic influence, which is seen through the Cardinal's influence in the play. Through this, Webster explores Protestant attitudes in conflict with Catholicism, as the Duchess defies the Cardinal's rules on marriage and adopts a more free-thinking, less ornate Protestant view – depicted through her discreet marriage to Antonio.

tries to develop links AO4 & AO3

AO2 techniques and analysis

overview of religious context A03 with brief support

tries to refocus on question AO1

Overall, Webster and Williams both use settings, perhaps as comparisons to more well-known locations, to explore the social ideas held there. As Williams uses the juxtaposition of New Orleans and Blanche's attitudes to class and race, to represent the shifting paradigm of equality, Webster uses the foreign, heavily religious setting of Italy to explore English attitudes to the court and its religion.

AO4 integration

An alternative view can be given to the statement however, based on the view that Williams uses setting to create more personal symbols for the characters, which may in fact only reflect his attitudes, whereas Webster does rely on setting to explore societal issues, and therefore they are not so alike. In 'Streetcar', Williams uses the bathroom in Stella and Stanley's flat to present Blanche's insecurities and her desire for purity and youth. She frequently bathes, and spends a long time doing it, prompting Stanley to question what it is she does in there. Those scenes also often take place alongside Stanley revealing more information about Blanche's past to Stella. This could be emphasising Blanche's knowledge of her past actions, and explains why she so desperately wants to physically cleanse herself of them. She states that after a bath she "always has a new outlook on life", which highlights her desire to start again, and erase all of her bad fortune.

AO5 different interpretations

However, in contrast, Webster uses the setting of Italy to allow for the exploration of darker themes that were associated with Jacobean tragedy, which would not have necessarily been as well accepted if they were set in England. The exotic location of Italy was still foreign to audiences in Webster's time, as travel was not frequently undertaken. Therefore, Italy's depiction of being exotic and something so opposite to England meant that Webster could create scenes such as when the Duchess is led to believe in the death of her family, and implications such as those from Ferdinand's line "this was my father's poniard; do you see?//I'd be loth to see't get rusty" were more plausible when one considered the setting of the play.

AO2 analysis

literary/
cultural
context
AO3

From this, the comparison between Williams and Webster is clear, as Williams manipulates the setting to more reflect personal attitudes of his characters, whereas Webster presents a widely known setting in that genre of plays, to be able to present such themes as was common in Jacobean tragedy. These differences may have originated from the contrasting style of two playwrights, as Williams wrote with the relatively new genre of realism, in which there is less extravagance, and it allows the audience to experience fear, as they see the truth in Williams' depiction, which is what makes it such an effectively tragic play. On the other hand, Webster wrote his plays within the genre of Jacobean tragedy which called for extravagant gestures and the gruesome tragedy that is seen in 'The Duchess of Malfi'. For this, he would need a setting that gave him scope to do so, and Italy provided him also with the distance he needed to avoid persecution from the crown.

AO2 support

focus on genre and contrasts in texts AO1/A04

Principal's comments

It is important to remember that this response was written at an early stage of the course. Nevertheless, there are several aspects to reward, such as the attempt to link texts to contexts, even if the discussion of contexts is sometimes rather general; the continual focus on the texts as plays and also on the concept of audience; the attempt to consider other interpretations and above all the continual effort to structure an argument and find some appropriate support from the texts. The response could have offered more discussion explicitly on 'social attitudes' but there is evidence of 'implicit' discussion. There is a clear focus on connections and evidence of some integration of points for discussion in addressing this heavily weighted AO, although more integration would have produced a better response.

AO1

Clearly informed, engaged, and on the whole well-structured. Sound knowledge of both plays. Sound, apt use of concepts and terminology. Accurate, clear expression, with some evidence of an academic style and register.

Band 4

AO2

Sound, accurate analysis and evaluation of writers' use of language and dramatic techniques. Secure, apt support with sound grasp of implicit meaning.

Band 4

AO3

Sound and secure appreciation and understanding of contexts and connections between texts and contexts, with good attempts to integrate context into discussion.

Band 4

AO4

Some sound and purposeful connections but plays need to be considered together as far as possible.

Band 4

AO5

Considers other interpretations but no use of different critical views.

Band 3

Component 3

Specimen Q 1.

Analyse the following passage from Henry James' *The Portrait of a Lady*, published in 1891. You must use the supporting extracts which follow the passage to help you consider contexts and different interpretations.

In the given extract of *The portrait of a lady*, the concept of suffering is perhaps most keenly evident in the form of women trapped in a patriarchal society with the independence that is so strongly desired being frowned upon.

On this evidence, Henry James' extract is concerned with the vulgar reality of married life within late Victorian society. An intriguing example of this is when the question is raised 'How could she—especially when she had known him better'. James' use of interpellation from the omniscient narrator is telling because it may be entailing that a man's arrogance and expectation for superiority over their wives is not an untold matter for their particular society. As well as this, the extract acknowledges a woman's intelligence within a marriage bringing forth to the readers attention that woman possesses the ability to step away from their husbands opinions or priorities to develop their own. Furthermore, using polysemic language creates the detailed idea that there are many reasons for why she cannot trust her husband's judgement. Maybe because he is socially below her in class so therefore is less educated on the matter at hand like she is. The quote also implies that because of her ability to comprehend things better than her husband, she knew him better than he knew himself: a virtuous power he would never realise she possessed.

Similarly, in a supporting extract written by Barbara Everett, it brings into perspective 'the reality of the tears and the ball-dress' which really made a marriage something that is unexpected to what is stereotypically conveyed. This gives an insight that marriage is not all what it is made up to be, it's not like a 'ball-dress' at all; not this beautiful thing but rather sometimes an ugly reality. It explores the idea that even in marriage there is an extent to what is expected of a woman which reflects a patriarchal way of life. There is the common norm of women being seen as the lesser of men within the late 19th century but in reality it is sometimes the women who have a bigger influence on men than they care to let on. Women play a big role in the way men behave, from the actions a man takes to impress a woman to that of getting her to marry him.

Another striking point made from the extract is the way in which marriage is portrayed as something which is withholding her from being able to talk about her opinion. She is trapped in 'the house of darkness, the house of dumbness, the house of suffocation'. The use of repetition as a rhetorical device emphasises the intensity of the matter and could be displaying how restricting marriage was for a woman in late Victorian society. It shows an understanding into a woman's perspective after being exploited by society for the majority of their lives. Furthering this, using manichean imagery in the form of 'darkness' may perhaps be exploring the emptiness that some marriages entail with the restrictions put in place from the husbands who see it as harmlessly treating woman how society has taught them too. It could also be the way women see their lives after they are married, they are unable to show their true emotions in fear of disappointing their husbands.

In perspective to this, a supporting extract written by Lyndall Gordon gives an insight into the idea then men don't see the way they in which they treat and act towards women to be harsh or unfair due to their 'conscious innocence without ignorance or naivety'. Meaning that men have been raised in a patriarchal society that sees women as its lesser, therefore the way they treat their wives comes from the morals they were raised with and see it as completely innocent to follow these norms. Maybe to them it is what is right and they don't take notice of how it affects their wives because they assumed it is what they would also see as the right way to behave in terms of gender roles.

Principal's comments

Well written in general – achieving a convincing academic register – but there are some lapses in clarity where (perhaps) expression has become a little over-ambitious. There is some evidence of creative engagement and some attempt to make use of the published resources. However, the balance of the response needs adjustment – the attention is mostly upon the ideas expressed rather than James' technique although there is some sensible attention to imagery.

AO1

Engaged and sensibly structured with a good sense of appropriate style. Mid Band 4

AO2

Although more is needed on technique with more analysis rather than commentary, there is just enough here for Low Band 4

AO3

There is some clear use of the extract and understanding of the significance of cultural values. Band 3

AO5

Some description of views and some use made but more detailed discussion needed. Low Band 3

The portrait of a Lady paragraphs

Throughout this stifling extract, James is concerned with presenting advancing female liberty and the subtle, receding oppression of this independence. A significant example of this is 'peep down from a small high window and mock' which, through the use of the verbs, 'peep' and 'mock' display Isabel Archer's dissatisfaction towards her husband's overbearing behaviour which allows her little freedom or independence. Not only does this exhibit how her husband, Gilbert Osmond, scrutinises her every action but how she is even taunted by him, demonstrating to the reader the stifling nature of her relationship and the distress it causes her. Perhaps, this may have been representative of late Victorian society and the typical dynamic within a marriage – the subtlety of confining behaviour which leads women to feel restrained in a relationship. Additionally, Gilbert Osmond peering down at his wife from a small 'high window' may be a metaphorical representation of the elevated status of men in the fin de siècle era and how Gilbert has a different perspective of their relationship. This prominent idea is reflected in Gordon's remark in the supporting extract, 'the question of the vote and education'. As such, James' novel possibly represents how although late Victorian society saw the emergence of women's rights on a larger scale, the inequality and subservience was ever-present in the homes and consequently relationships of the British public.

Another distinctive feature of this compelling extract is James' presentation of the underlying inequalities and discontent of seemingly typical and happy marriages specific to late Victorian society. This contrast in perceived ideals and reality is demonstrated when Isabel Archer is listing the ostensibly positive qualities of her husband yet she concludes the list with the conflicting remark that 'his egotism lay hidden like a serpent in a bank of flowers.' James' use of a simile here may create the idea that Isabel's husband is secretive, sly and dangerous with his true nature akin to that of a creature well associated with dual personalities – possibly reflective of the nature of his relationship. Furthermore, the 'bank of flowers' could perhaps represent the superficial and trivial happiness of their relationship and that, upon delving deeper into the roots of their relationship, it can be found that Gilbert is conceited and not all that he appears to be. Perhaps this secretive behaviour is paralleled in Everett's remark, 'the jungle within the drawing room' which highlights the frantic, chaotic nature of a relationship beneath the respectable, typical societal views of a marriage. In essence, James' novel begins to call in to question the foundations of relationships and how although explicit behaviour may be commonplace and exemplary, the inequality faced by women often lead marriage to be a stifling experience.

James consistently presents the true nightmarish qualities of the domestic sphere for women; through their oppression and belittlement it can be a suffocating surrounding that seeks to regress the advancements of female liberty. Such an idea is present during the description of the house itself, 'it was the house of darkness, the house of dumbness, the house of suffocation.' This list of three persistently reaffirms Isabel's unhappiness, diminishing creativity and fear of her forthcoming downfall upon being stifled by her husband. Furthermore the use of Manichean imagery, 'darkness', may be reflective of the foreboding malevolence of her marriage and how the house itself may be a metaphorical

representation of the constraints of a marriage in the late 19th century. Such an idea is also commented by Everett who notes that the 'reality of the tears and the ball-dress' is much harsher and bleaker than the superficial appearance of a relationship in society. As such, James' presentation of the physical and metaphorical boundaries of married life offers a non-standard insight of a usually admired relationship that in fact demonstrates how typical societal roles for women in a marriage were in fact very oppressive.

A distinctive feature in James' novel is the presentation of the idea that married life is very exclusive, leading to those in the marriage becoming detached from the outside world and other endeavours. This particular idea is apparent in 'the world had always interested her and the study of her fellow creatures been her constant passion'. James' use of 'creatures' here may have been referencing Isabel's friends and others in society which would highlight her distance from humanity – all as a result of her marriage. Although they are 'fellow' beings there is a certain detachment as Isabel does not consider herself a human, perhaps due to the constant belittlement she faces in her relationship. Furthermore, the use of the perfect aspect verb 'had' could suggest completion that Isabel no longer is fascinated with the world, because she is so trapped and creatively quelled by her husband. This idea is reflected in the supporting extract in Everett's remark, 'the 'real life' of London in the Eighties and Nineties'. Fundamentally, James' novel embodies the true restrictions of marriage and therefore how in the fin de siècle era, inequality in relationships was still prominent and this often created a very uncomfortable situation for women.

Principal's comments

A confident and convincing start which addresses language and technique and offers good support. The writing is analytical and evaluative with a clear academic style. This work is particularly impressive if it was produced under timed conditions. Well done – a very promising candidate.

AO1

Powerfully engaged and convincingly expressed. Very well organised. High Band 5

AO2

Perceptive analysis of language and techniques. Mid Band 5

AO3

Very well integrated – discerning use of material. Low Band 5

AO5

Sound use of extracts and purposeful reference to other possible readings. High Band 4

Specimen Q 3

Analyse the following poem. Your response must include detailed discussion of how meanings are shaped in the poem.

In Stevenson's 'To my Daughter In a Red Coat' a sense of transience portrayed through movement and the seasons is contrasted with this sense of entrapment. This is overtly evident in "my daughter and I walk through the leaf strewn / corridors of the past". Stevenson's verb "walk" connotes a journey and sense of liminality. Consequently coupled with the pronouns "of my" and "I", the walk through the past may be an extended metaphor for their relationship throughout her life. Consequently, the autumnal imagery in "leaf-strewn" may portray the changeable and unpredictable relationship. Moreover, Stevenson's clever use of enjambement ensures that the first stanza is like a journey; a speaker would not pause. Subsequently, graphologically the poem appears as though it is travelling. However, Stevenson juxtaposes this transience in the noun "Corridors", which may connote incarceration. It is very interesting how Stevenson contrasts the imagery of internal and external space. Therefore, Stevenson's use of setting in the poem may be to symbolise the changeable relationship between mother and daughter throughout a lifetime. Moreover, Stevenson may be seen as ending the poem on a jubilant or optimistic note in the last stanza, which may be perceived as the volta in the poem. This is evident in "You come so fast, so fast". Stevenson's use of interpolation in the second person pronoun "You" implies that the speaker is now an observer, rather

enforcing this contrast



Stevenson's verbs "fall" and "spread" delineates the setting as shrouded in a veil of dying nature. Furthermore, "small winds stir the minor dead". Stevenson's use of sibilance implies that the personified wind ^{which is evident} in the verb "stir" is whispering ~~and the~~ ~~leaves~~ ~~are~~ which may be perceived as quite sinister. Moreover, this sinister tone could be seen in the adjective "minor" which may imply children or people who have had little significance on the world. Subsequently, a harsh existence is portrayed. Stevenson does end-rhyme these two lines in "spread/dead" which may be perceived as optimistic or implying that death creates a sense of finality. Stevenson uses the girl as a device to contrast this. This is implied in not only the description of her clothes but also in "my daughter, as your coat dances". Stevenson's verb "dances" implies continual movement instead of the static nature of the leaves. Furthermore, the ~~noun~~ "coat" determiner "my" implies that the speaker has a lot of affection for the girl who is creating joy and life, as the noun "coat" implies that she is making other objects move.

Principal's comments

A good start with the emphasis upon analysis rather than commentary or explanation. Some minor slips in expression but generally confident and clear – appropriate academic style. Candidate's sophistication is apparent throughout – ideas are pursued confidently without "working through" the text. Excellent work – very promising.

AO1

Confident and perceptive with an apt/mature use of terminology. Low Band 5

AO2

Meaningful remarks on structure strengthen the response. Mid Band 5

'To My Daughter In a Red Coat'

Unseen Poetry

Throughout the poem 'To My Daughter In a Red Coat', Anne Stevenson explores the close bond between a Mother and her "daughter": "My daughter and I walk through leaf-strewn corridors of the Park". The possessive determiner "My" helps to create a ~~strong~~ motherly sense of ownership building on the idea that the Mother and daughter have an extremely strong and caring bond. The fact that the determiner "my" comes before the first person pronoun "I" suggests could be representational of how the mother has put her daughter first and is letting her "walk" ahead under her watchful eye. This positive image of the mother and daughter is contrasted greatly by the uneasy, eerie image created by the metaphor "leaf strewn corridors of the Park". The noun "corridors", in this context, has connotations of being confined and entrapping, juxtaposing this to the playful image of the daughter running "so fast". Perhaps the poet is creating an underlying sense of danger that the mother and daughter fail to see. However, the "corridors" could also represent the youth and rebirth that comes with school, which could suggest that although it is "late October" the daughter can be seen as a beacon of light (linking to her "red coat") and passion in an otherwise autumnal environment.

The bond between the Mother and daughter continues to thrive as they venture on their "walk": "Around us ~~small~~ brown leaves fall and spread / small winds stir the river

ed". The pronoun "us" creates a sense of unity and emphasises further this family bond that is ongoing throughout the poem. The two are brought together and although the daughter fears "to fast" the two still remain together. However the colour imagery in "brown" contrasts greatly to the passionate, warming "red" of the daughter's "coat" and suggests that despite the cold around her dying she is a sign of youth and rebirth. The "red" also links to the maternal poetic voice, with the colour possibly linking to the mother's womb. Once again, an eerie atmosphere is created to juxtapose the daughter's passion. The simile in "Small winds stir the minor dead" is almost representational of the winds whistling, almost spitting at the mother and daughter as they walk. The verb to "stir" also creates the sense that the mother and daughter are in a place untouched by people, and perhaps a place of rest, and it is their movements disturbing the "minor dead".

This sense of dis-taste towards the girl and her mother is emphasised by the "those shrivelled women" who "stare" at her. The figurative adjective "shrivelled" links to the autumnal imagery of the "brown leaves" that "fall and spread" and could represent the "women" as almost deathly or unwell. In a sense the poetic voice shows a lack of remorse to the older generation, however it shows as if her daughter's passion is frowned upon in this "cold", "brown" world. This idea of death is emphasised when the "women" are said to be staring

from "cold benches". Building on the eerie atmosphere, Stevenson creates a complete ~~parallel~~ ^{contrast} between the youth of the "daughter" and the way her coat "dances" compared to stone-like "women" who "stare" at them. Perhaps this eerie image is a representation of ~~gender~~ generational friction, and how the younger and older generations can, at times, struggle to understand each other.

Principal's comments

Once again, a genuine attempt to analyse technique and language choices from the start although, as above, the writing might be a little "clogged" with technical English language terminology – emphasis needs to be reconsidered and placed upon literary terminology. Reading becomes a little less confident/convincing towards the end of the response.

AO1

Clearly engaged and reasonably coherent. Expression is mostly accurate. Mid Band 3

AO2

Some examples of purposeful, detailed writing with accurate textual support. High Band 3