



AS ENGLISH LITERATURE A 7711/2

Paper 2 Love through the ages: Prose

Mark scheme

June 2025

Version: 1.0 Final



Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

No student should be disadvantaged on the basis of their gender identity and/or how they refer to the gender identity of others in their exam responses.

A consistent use of 'they/them' as a singular and pronouns beyond 'she/her' or 'he/him' will be credited in exam responses in line with existing mark scheme criteria.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from aqa.org.uk

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Level of response marking instructions

Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level. There are marks in each level.

Before you apply the mark scheme to a student's answer read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. You can then apply the mark scheme.

Step 1 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer. With practice and familiarity you will find that for better answers you will be able to quickly skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme.

When assigning a level you should look at the overall quality of the answer and not look to pick holes in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level, ie if the response is predominantly level 3 with a small amount of level 4 material it would be placed in level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the level 4 content.

Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help with this. The exemplar materials used during standardisation will help. There will be an answer in the standardising materials which will correspond with each level of the mark scheme. This answer will have been awarded a mark by the Lead Examiner. You can compare the student's answer with the example to determine if it is the same standard, better or worse than the example. You can then use this to allocate a mark for the answer based on the Lead Examiner's mark on the example.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points. Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the Indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

7711/2 Love through the ages: Prose Mark Scheme

Welcome to this mark scheme which is designed to help you deliver fair and accurate assessment. Please read all sections carefully and ensure that you follow the requirements that they contain.

The significance of Closed Book

Examiners must understand that in marking a Closed Book exam there are examining implications. Candidates do not have their texts in front of them, so while it is expected that they will use quotations, it is also legitimate to use close textual references. They will have had to memorise quotations so there may be some errors which should not be over-penalised. Detailed discussions of particular sections of texts, apart from printed extracts, are less likely here than in Open Book exams. Instead, candidates may range broadly across their texts as they construct their arguments.

There are specific issues for AO2 – how meanings are shaped in texts. There is, with Closed Book, the expectation that candidates will not have the texts in front of them, so although they will sometimes be able to make specific references to structural and organisational issues, at other times they will be more general.

Arriving at Marks

1. All questions are framed to address all the Assessment Objectives (AOs). Weightings are given above the generic mark scheme. Answers are marked **holistically** but, when deciding upon a mark in a band, examiners should bear in mind the relative weightings of the assessment objectives (see page 6) and be careful not to over/under credit a particular skill. This will be exemplified and reinforced as part of examiner training and standardisation. Examiners need to read the whole answer taking into account its strengths and weaknesses and then place it in the appropriate band.
2. Examiners should avoid making early snap judgements before the whole answer has been read. Some candidates begin tentatively but go on to make relevant points.
3. Examiners should be prepared to use the full mark range and not ‘bunch’ scripts in the middle for safety. Top band marks are attainable if candidates could not be expected to do more in the time and under the conditions in which they are working.
4. Examiners should mark positively. Although the mark scheme provides some indicators for what candidates are likely to write about, examiners should be willing to reward what is actually there – **provided, of course, that it is relevant to the question being asked.**
5. Examiners should remember that there are no right answers. Candidates’ views which are relevant, well-argued and supported by appropriate textual evidence must receive credit whether the examiner agrees with the views or not. It is important to try to remain flexible if a candidate introduces unusual or unorthodox ideas.
6. Examiners should remember that length and quality are not synonymous. Some brief answers may be relevant and concise. Equally, long answers may be diffuse and repetitive.
7. If answers are short or incomplete, examiners can only reward what is there and assess accordingly. Some further credit may be given to answers finished in note form.

Using the Mark Bands

8. When placing answers in mark bands, examiners need to look closely at the descriptors and the detailed generic mark bands on page 9. The key words for the bands are important and are printed below.

MARK BAND DESCRIPTORS	
Band 5	perceptive/assured
Band 4	coherent/thorough
Band 3	straightforward/relevant
Band 2	simple/generalised
Band 1	largely irrelevant, largely misunderstood, largely inaccurate

9. Answers placed at the top of the band will securely address the descriptors; answers at the lower end of the band will securely address the descriptors below and begin to show the qualities of the band into which you are placing them. Careful judgements need to be made about marks in the middle of the range; here it is likely that the key descriptors will be more intermittent but still clearly evident.
10. There will be occasions when an answer addresses descriptors in different bands; in such cases, the 'best-fit' model applies. Here examiners will need to exercise a different kind of judgement, looking to see where the answer can be most fairly and appropriately placed in terms of its quality against the descriptors.
11. Examiners must remember that the mark bands are not equivalent to grades: grades are decided by the awarding committee at the end of each session.

Advice about marking specific sections

12. Examiners need to bear in mind the following key points when marking extract-based questions:
- does the candidate have an overview of the extract(s)?
 - has the candidate written about authorial method(s)?
 - has the candidate seen the significance of the extract in relation to the central historicist literary concept?
 - has the candidate quoted from the extract to support ideas?
 - the candidate's AO1 competence.
13. Examiners need to bear in mind the following key points when marking questions based on single texts:
- has the candidate engaged in a relevant debate or constructed a relevant argument?
 - has the candidate referred to different parts of the text to support their views?
 - has the candidate seen the significance of the text in relation to the central historicist literary concept?
 - has the candidate referred to authorial method?
 - the candidate's AO1 competence.

Annotation

14. Examiners should remember that annotation is directed solely to senior examiners.
15. In addition to giving a mark, examiners should write a brief summative comment indicating how the mark has been arrived at. These comments are likely to mirror the appropriate mark band descriptors but comments must not be mechanical. Examiners need to describe candidate performance.
16. Please remember that scripts can go back to candidates, so although your audience is a senior examiner, you must express your views temperately.
17. Please use the e-Marker2 annotation symbols provided and do not use your own private systems, as these will mean nothing to senior examiners. If in doubt about what to use, simply write clear comments. Use the Practice Scripts for guidance.
18. The following symbols are provided within the e-Marker2 screen for use when marking scripts:
 - ✓ for a good point, idea, reference etc
 - x for factual inaccuracy
 - ? for when meaning is not clear
 - ^ for when points need more explanation or exemplification
 - U for 'unfocused' where the question has slipped out of focus
 - SEEN to acknowledge plans/footnotes made by students (it is not necessary to use this on blank pages; the e-Marker2 scrolling system automatically acknowledges blank pages).

The Assessment Objectives and their significance

19. All questions are framed to test AOs 2, 3, 4 and 5, so if candidates answer the question, then they will be addressing the AOs. In marking questions, however, examiners must also take account of AO1, which tests more than technical accuracy.

The AOs are as follows:

- AO1** Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression. (28%)
- AO2** Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts. (24%)
- AO3** Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received. (24%)
- AO4** Explore connections across literary texts. (12%)
- AO5** Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations. (12%)

Rubric Infringements

If there has been an infringement, the whole answer needs to be read and judged on its quality. A mark should then be given based on the best relevant part of the response. The mark given will not be beyond Band 3.

Mark Scheme

It is important to remember that these students are 16–17 years old, so we are judging their skills at Key Stage 5.

Weightings for each question are as follows:

AO1: 7 marks AO2: 6 marks AO3: 6 marks AO4: 3 marks AO5: 3 marks

Mark	AO	Typical features	How to arrive at mark
Band 5 Perceptive/Assured 21–25 marks 'Perception' is demonstrated when students are showing the depth of their understanding and responding sensitively to the texts and task. 'Assuredness' is shown when students write with confidence and conviction.	AO1	- perceptive, assured and sophisticated argument in relation to the task - assured use of literary critical concepts and terminology; mature and impressive expression	This band is characterised by perceptive and assured work which shows confidence, sharpness of mind and sophistication in relation to the task. At the top of the band students are consistently assured and will demonstrate sensitivity and perception across all five assessment objectives in the course of their response. At the bottom of the band there will be coherence and accuracy with some perception but with less consistency and evenness.
	AO2	- perceptive understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task - assured engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used	
	AO3	- perceptive understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task - assuredness in the connection between those contexts and the historicist literary concept studied	
	AO4	perceptive exploration of connections across literary texts arising out of historicist study	
	AO5	perceptive and confident engagement with the debate set up in the task	

Band 4 Coherent/Thorough 16–20 marks ‘Coherence’ is shown when students are logical and consistent in their arguments in relation to the task. They hold their ideas together in an intelligible way. ‘Thoroughness’ is shown when students write carefully, precisely and accurately.	AO1	- logical, thorough and coherent argument in relation to the task where ideas are debated in depth - appropriate use of literary critical concepts and terminology; precise and accurate expression	This band is characterised by coherent and thorough work where ideas are linked together in a focused and purposeful way in relation to the task. At the top of the band students will demonstrate a fully coherent and thorough argument across all five assessment objectives in the course of their response. At the bottom of the band ideas will be discussed in a shaped, relevant and purposeful way with a clear sense of direction, with one or two lapses in coherence and accuracy.
	AO2	- thorough understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task - thorough engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used	
	AO3	- thorough understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task - coherence in the connection between those contexts and the historicist literary concept studied	
	AO4	logical and consistent exploration of connections across literary texts arising out of historicist study	
	AO5	thorough engagement with the debate set up in the task	

Band 3 Straightforward/ Relevant 11–15 marks 'Straightforward' work is shown when students make their ideas in relation to the task clearly known. 'Relevant' work is shown when students are focused on the task and use detail in an appropriate and supportive way.	AO1	• sensibly ordered ideas in a relevant argument in relation to the task • some use of literary critical concepts and terminology which are mainly appropriate; straightforward and clear expression	This band is characterised by straightforward and relevant work where the student's response to the task is clear and intelligible. At the top of the band students will demonstrate consistent straightforward understanding in the course of their argument. Ideas will be developed relevantly. At the bottom of the band there will be flashes of relevant understanding with evidence of straightforward thinking.
	AO2	• straightforward understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task • relevant engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used	
	AO3	• straightforward understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task • relevant connections between those contexts and the historicist literary concept studied	
	AO4	• explores connections across literary texts arising out of historicist study in a straightforward way	
	AO5	• straightforward engagement with the debate set up in the task	

Band 2 Simple/Generalised 6–10 marks ‘Simple’ work is shown when students write in an unelaborated and basic way in relation to the task. ‘Generalised’ work is shown when students write without regard to particular details.	AO1	• a simple structure to the argument which may not be consistent but which does relate to the task. • generalised use of literary critical concepts and terminology; simple expression	This band is characterised by simple and generalised work which is mainly linked to the task. At the top of the band students will demonstrate a basic generalised understanding in the course of their answer. Ideas will be developed in a simple way. At the bottom of the band there will be inconsistency, but the beginnings of a simple and generalised understanding.
	AO2	• simple understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task • generalised engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used	
	AO3	• simple understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task • generalised connections between those contexts and the historicist literary concept studied	
	AO4	• simple exploration of connections across literary texts arising out of historicist study	
	AO5	• simple and generalised response to the debate set up in the task	

Band 1 Largely irrelevant/largely misunderstood/largely inaccurate 1–5 marks ‘Largely irrelevant’ work is shown when students write in an unclear way with only occasional reference to what is required by the question. ‘Largely misunderstood’ and ‘largely inaccurate’ work is shown when knowledge of the text is insecure, hazy and often wrong.	• some vague points in relation to the task and some ideas about task and text(s) • the writing is likely to be unclear and incorrect; if it is accurate the content will be irrelevant • little sense of the AOs in relation to the task; little sense of how meanings are shaped; little sense of any relevant contexts; little sense of any connection arising out of historicist study; little sense of an argument in relation to the task	This band is characterised by work which is largely irrelevant and largely misunderstood and largely inaccurate, and so unlikely to be addressing the AOs in a relevant way. At the top of the band students will mention some unconnected points in relation to the task during the course of their writing. The writing is likely to lack clarity. At the bottom of the band there will be no connection with the task; the writing will be hard to follow and irrelevant.
0 marks	No marks for response when nothing is written or where response has no connection to the text(s) or task.	

Section A: Unseen prose

Question 01

0	1
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The Evening of the Holiday by Shirley Hazzard (1931–2016) was published in 1966. Sophie, a young independent woman, is close to the end of a holiday in Italy when she meets an Italian, Tancredi, who is an older man, separated from his wife. Tancredi is keen to develop their relationship and has recently written Sophie a love letter. In this extract, Sophie buys a bunch of carnations in a local market before returning to her hotel.

Examine the view that Sophie is presented as more worried than excited by her developing relationship with Tancredi.

Make close reference to the writer's methods in your response.

[25 marks]

Possible content:

Please refer to pages 4 to 6.

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations

Students might consider:

- Sophie's feelings about Tancredi show her worry; she is deliberately avoiding him and plans to leave in two days' time
- the relationship between the two is unequal and this concerns her; he is 'chasing' her and attempts to control events by asserting that she 'won't leave' and that he can make her 'happy'
- Sophie is worried as the developing relationship is more like a battle for control
- Sophie and Tancredi are caught in an unbalanced relationship; he is the older man who seeks to change and influence her life
- Sophie is beginning to fall in love without realising it; various aspects of the extract suggest this – her act of buying flowers, imagining that she sees Tancredi earlier and her memories of 'the lasting nature of any form of love'
- the extent to which Sophie is influenced by Tancredi's understanding that she is in love and his certainty that they have a future and can be happy together
- the extent to which love is presented as disruptive and out of the ordinary suggests that Sophie is excited by the developing relationship; Sophie admits that Tancredi is a 'threat' to her
- the excitement of love that develops even in problematic circumstances when lovers 'listen to the music' rather than 'following the score'
- the intense excitement of holiday romances
- the words 'more', 'worried', 'excited', 'developing relationship' in the given view
- etc.

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts

Focus might be on:

- the significance of holiday romances, seduction and courtship in the literature of love through the ages
- the use of Italy as a setting in prose narratives about love
- the significance of flowers as a trope in literature about love
- age and cultural differences between lovers
- gender differences in the experience of love
- the ways in which developing relationships can be presented as a fight for control
- the use of dialogue in prose fiction
- etc.

AO3 Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received

Focus might be on:

- changing cultural assumptions about stereotypical male behaviour
- the literary context of Italy in narratives about love
- the differing responses to love because of gender
- how attitudes to age-gap relationships may have changed over time and may change from culture to culture
- etc.

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts

Focus might be on:

- the shifting narrative perspectives of the extract
- the use of the carnations to represent both developing love and memories of love
- the sensual language describing the flowers; 'their strong delicious scent'
- how Sophie's indecision is conveyed in her walk; 'she began to climb the steep street she had just come down.'
- the significance of Sophie's perspective in the use of free indirect discourse that shows her memories of adolescent love and 'the lasting nature of any form of love.'
- the significance of the shift to Tancredi's perspective and his conclusion that 'she is in love.'
- the importance of military metaphors denoting the developing relationship; Sophie tells Tancredi he is 'threat' to her; the significance of the simile that she felt 'like a defeated general' now she is back with him
- the terse, stylised dialogue between the two to present a developing relationship
- the description of Sophie's and Tancredi's body language in the hotel; the focus on their hands to show the ebb and flow of the interaction, for example, 'he lifted her hand on to his knee'
- the focus on time in the extract to present the intensity of a holiday romance; Tancredi feels that their relationship has a future 'tomorrow'; to Sophie tomorrow is 'as unlikely as the end of summer.'
- etc.

AO1 Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression

- quality of argument
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and terminology
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid interpretations, any valid comments on contexts and any valid discussion of authorial methods.

Section B: Comparing Prose Texts

Question 02

0	2
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 'In literature, women are often presented as passive lovers who rarely take charge.'

By comparing **two** prose texts, explore the extent to which you agree with this statement.
[25 marks]

Possible content:

Please refer to pages 4 to 6.

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations

Students might consider:

- the ways in which women as lovers can be presented as passive objects of desire actively pursued by men
- the extent to which the male point of view can be privileged in some literary texts and women as lovers can appear passive and unable to take charge
- the extent to which women as lovers can be presented as the passive victims of men who try to dominate them
- the ways in which women as lovers can challenge patriarchal values and are able to take charge through their ability to change and challenge their partners
- the extent to which women's passivity as lovers can be presented as a form of resilience and emotional maturity
- the extent to which men can be seen as passive lovers who rarely take charge
- the words 'passive', 'lovers', 'rarely' and 'take charge' in the question
- etc.

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts

Focus might be on:

- similarity and/or difference at the level of subject matter
- similarity and/or difference at the level of prose and narrative methods and how writers present women to explore the nature of love
- the extent to which each text's presentation of women as lovers can be seen as typical of the prose genre or its historical period
- etc.

AO3 Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received

Focus might be on:

- varying expectations of women from differing times
- relevant issues of class, gender, culture, period or text type that might influence ideas about women
- how attitudes towards women and their roles and actions might have changed over time
- the presentation of women as lovers in varying prose genres and love narratives
- etc.

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts

Students may focus on **relevant** aspects of:

- narrative perspective
- use of speech and dialogue
- form and genre
- structure
- characterisation
- language, voice, imagery and other literary devices
- etc.

AO1 Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression

- quality of argument
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and terminology
- technical accuracy
- comparing texts.

Accept any valid interpretations, any valid comments on contexts and any valid discussion of authorial methods.

Question 03

0 3 'In literature, love is presented as full of risk.'

By comparing **two** prose texts, explore this view.

[25 marks]

Possible content:

Please refer to pages 4 to 6.

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations

Students might consider:

- the varying aspects of risk such as emotional and physical pain
- the extent to which love is presented as a risk that is damaging and uncontrollable
- the extent to which chance encounters may involve potential risks
- how love is a risk that can test and challenge previously held values and attitudes
- the varying risks that lovers might face such as emotional pain, the risk of rejection/the lack of acceptance by family, friends, society, etc
- how lovers must take risks if they are to change their lives
- the ways in which the risk of love is a catalyst for more fundamental personal change
- how the risk of love can challenge social stereotypes and values
- the extent to which love is inevitable and is never a risk where relationships are socially managed or gradually develop over time
- use of 'full of' and 'risk' in the given view
- etc.

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts

Focus might be on:

- similarity and/or difference at the level of subject matter
- similarity and/or difference at the level of prose and narrative methods and how writers present the possible risks involved with love
- the extent to which each text's representation of love can be seen as typical of the prose genre or its historical period
- etc.

AO3 Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received

Focus might be on:

- the ways in which personal and social attitudes towards love and risk might have changed over time
- the extent to which attitudes to gender might support the view that love is full of risk
- relevant issues of class, gender, culture, period or text type that might make love full of risk
- the expectations of genre and love narratives from different times
- etc.

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts

Students may focus on **relevant** aspects of:

- narrative perspective
- use of speech and dialogue
- form and genre
- structure
- characterisation
- language, voice, imagery and other literary devices
- etc.

AO1 Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression

- quality of argument
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and terminology
- technical accuracy
- comparing texts.

Accept any valid interpretations, any valid comments on contexts and any valid discussion of authorial methods.