



A-Level

English Language & Literature

7707/1

Report on the Examination

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Contents

The below table is interactive. You can press the control button click on the title of the question to go directly to that page.

Contents	Page
Summary	3
Assessment objectives	6
Individual questions	9
Further support	26

Summary

Overall performance compared to last year

Generally, performance was on par with last year, with most students being well-prepared for the paper and managing to answer all three questions. There is a clear awareness of the distribution of marks across the Assessment Objectives for each question and most students are addressing those AOs within their responses to each question.

Students continue to approach the examination in different ways and answer questions in a different order; where they leave the higher-tariff question (section A) until last, this can impact marks for that question as they run out of time. Most students approach the different questions with an understanding of the weighting of the Assessment Objectives and shape their responses accordingly.

In section A, most students were aware of the need to select textual examples from both texts and make connections between the texts. AO1 was generally handled well, with nearly 90% of students being awarded a mark in level 3 or above. Most students could select at least some grammar language features and link these to ideas about representation or context, genre or mode. For AO3, 94% of students achieved a mark in level 3 or above, showing that many students are aware of the need to include this in their response. Most students were able to discuss aspects of context, genre and mode and were able to make connections in terms of these elements; it is worth noting that students are often more comfortable addressing aspects of context (production and reception) than genre and mode features. In the examination paper, there was an error in the question: it referred to the *writers* of Text A and Text B rather than the *writer of Text A and the speaker of Text B*; this did not appear to cause any confusion for students and they were able to identify Text B as spoken mode and discuss the features of this mode. If anything, students were more likely to ignore the written mode of Text A and how this shaped language and representations. For AO4, 95% of students were awarded a mark in level 3 or above, demonstrating their ability to discuss at least some ideas about representation and make some connections. Most students were able to comment on representation in both texts, even if it was discussing obvious aspects such as the positive representation in Text A and more negative representation in Text B (see notes on question 1 for further details).

In section B, the most common text was *The Handmaid's Tale* and the most answered question was Q6 (acts of violence) followed by Q7 (motherhood), Q2 (*Frankenstein* – characters' acts of destruction), Q8 (*The Lovely Bones* – Len Fenerman), Q4 (*Dracula* – character of Dracula), Q3 (*Frankenstein* – characters' desire for friendship), Q9 (*The Lovely Bones* – wider community) then Q5 (*Dracula* – characters' concerns for others). Most students were able to demonstrate some understanding of the extract for their set text and chosen question, and make at least one link to elsewhere in the novel. There were very few responses which lacked *any* linguistic analysis but, as seen in previous years, this was sometimes not as strong in this section as it was for sections A and C. Most students were able to offer discussion of the question focus. Stronger responses were able to focus on the *significance* aspect of the question stem and offer some discussion of writer's craft; there was not always consideration of narrative

techniques. Most students were able to include at least some consideration of genre conventions and contextual influences, particularly those answering a question on *The Handmaid's Tale*.

In section C, the majority of the responses were on Duffy, followed by Heaney, Browning and then Donne. The most popular question was Q14 (Duffy - speaker's attitudes to past experiences, followed by Q15 (Duffy - speaker's attitudes towards others), Q16 (Heaney - feelings of loss), Q17 (Heaney - speaker's memories of events), Q10 (Donne - speaker's feelings of unhappiness), Q13 (Browning - events), Q12 (Browning - speaker's feelings about particular places), then Q11 (Donne - events). Most students were able to select language features in the named poem and their chosen poem to discuss in relation to the question focus. There was still some focus in weaker responses on comparing the poems or on including contextual information about the poets (neither AO3 nor AO4 are assessed in section C).

Areas where students excelled

- Completing all three sections of the examination within the time.
- Understanding the requirements of the different AOs across the different questions.
- AO2 for sections B & C - some really thoughtful interpretations of texts.
- Addressing AO3 in section B, particularly in responses to *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Lovely Bones* questions.
- Understanding that AO3 for section B needs to include genre as this accounts for two out of three of the bullet points in that AO.
- Analysis of the construction of poetic voice in section C - more students seemed to be able to address this in Heaney and Duffy poems than seen in previous years.

Areas where students struggled

- Sustaining analysis of language features across all three sections (this was often stronger in sections A and C than in section B). AO1 is assessed in every question so students need to approach all questions with a focus on language analysis.
- Selecting language levels purposefully (some students identify a feature from a textual example but don't discuss meanings or impact of those, e.g., where they select a sentence mood such as a declarative).
- Using language terminology accurately and understanding that word classes are often context-dependent, e.g., 'love' in text B of section A is used as both a verb and an abstract noun but was often labelled as just one of these word classes in both examples.
- Applying deixis (spatial and temporal) accurately rather than using it for any reference to time. Misuse of this term was evident even in stronger responses.
- Applying accurate terminology for listing; many stronger responses labelled the syndetic list in text A in section A as asyndetic, particularly where they didn't quote the whole list. This was also evident when students discussed lists within their chosen texts for section B and C.

- Exploring the *significance* aspect of the question in section B (some students explain how the question focus, such as character/theme is presented without exploring the significance of that presentation).
- Only being able to make a brief link to one other point in the novel for section B – often just one brief quotation taken out of context.
- AO3 for section A – some students describe elements of this in the introduction then don't address it again. It can be really useful and students can access higher marks for AO3 in section A if they link their discussion of context, genre and mode to the discussion of language choices and representation.

Assessment objectives

AO	Common student errors
AO1 Apply concepts and methods from integrated linguistic and literary study as appropriate, using associated terminology and coherent written expression	• Selected language levels which did not help them to analyse ideas about representation or presentation of character, poetic voice, attitude, feelings • Identified features without linking them to how meaning is shaped • Referenced 'semantic fields of nouns/adjectives/verbs' rather than linking them to patterns of language & meaning • Identified sentence types such as declaratives with no comment on the impact of this choice, offering instead vague comments on the meaning of the whole sentence or selecting a different language feature within the declarative to then comment on • Referred generally to modality without identifying whether it is epistemic, boulomaic or deontic – or wrongly labelled one as another • Confused metaphor, simile and personification • Used noun phrase, verb phrase, adverbial/adjectival phrase for whole sentences • Confused simple and minor sentences • Confused syndetic, asyndetic and polysyndetic lists • Used deixis for any mention of place or time • Used very general terminology such as phrase (for whole sentences), repetition (without identifying the language feature being repeated), imagery, tone, high/low frequency lexis, juxtaposition (without acknowledging the language features being juxtaposed) • Labelled phonological features such as sibilance, plosives, fricatives with no analysis of how they shape meaning • Included minimal or no linguistic description in section B when they had applied it in sections A & C • In section C, mentioned structural features such as rhyme, metre, caesura and enjambment without textual examples and with no discussion of how they contribute to meaning

A02 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in texts	• Only focused on the extract in section B or the named poem in section C, rather than selecting from across the novel or from a second poem, resulting in a mark capped at level 2 • Selected from outside the extract (section B) or another poem (section C) but selection was not clearly relevant to the question focus • Did not address the significance aspect of the question stem in section B • Lost focus on the question as the response went on, offering more general ideas about the textual selections • Offering basic interpretations of textual examples and language features, rather than examining/evaluating how meaning is shaped by these choices • Not offering any discussion of narrative techniques in section B or the construction of poetic voice in section C
A03 Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which texts are produced and received	• Briefly identified/described context, genre and mode in the introduction in section A, and genre on section B, then didn't mention it again in relation to the question focus • Were vague about contextual factors such as purpose and audience in section A • Did not address mode in both texts in section A or simply pointed out features rather than discussing them in relation to representation or meaning • Didn't address genre at all in section B, instead focusing solely on context of production (two out of three assessment criteria bullet points are focused on genre/fantasy) • Made A03 the sole focus of their response in section A without addressing representation, and in section B without exploring the character/theme
A04 Explore connections across texts, informed by linguistic and literary concepts and methods	• Only discussed connections in terms of A03 factors, rather than representation • Made brief connections in the introduction and conclusion but discussed the texts separately in the rest of the response • Used a general comparative discourse marker when changing from discussing one text to another without there being an actual point of connection

	• Compared the use of a language feature, such as the use of listing, without any relation to representation • Offered very simple ideas about representation – that the writer/speaker was positive or negative about youthful experiences in Paris
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Individual questions

Question 1

Compare and contrast how the writers of Text A and Text B express their ideas about youthful experiences in Paris.

You should refer to both texts in your answer.

What students did well

- Allowed enough time to answer this higher tariff question
- Led their response with comparisons of representation
- Integrated all three AOs throughout their response
- Selected a range of language levels/features to discuss in relation to representation
- Quoted and labelled precisely e.g. types of lists, type of modality, types of deixis, word sub-classes, phrase types, using terminology to aid their analysis and evaluation rather than just identifying features
- Very precisely focused on the "youthful" aspect of the question, exploring ideas such as naivety, bildungsroman, double journeys
- Explored patterns which reinforced the idea of a young perspective, such as Miller's juxtaposing descriptions of her own outfit compared to Monique's, or Zara's comparisons of childlike language and ideas (interrogatives about Disneyland compared to declaratives expressing her growing understanding
- Explored the idea of Paris itself as an active agent in this growing understanding, linking to stereotypes of Paris as a place of coming of age and freedom of expression
- Compared nuanced representations across the two texts such as the representation of self, others, and Paris in relation to the youthful experience
- Recognised the nuanced experience in both texts e.g. Miller's positive experiences of female relationships with her friend, but also more negative experiences such as the interactions with the young men and cleaning woman, as well as her feelings of insecurity, compared with Zara's initial childlike feelings of disappointment which then transformed into greater affection for Paris as she grew older
- Integrated aspects of context throughout their response to explain why these ideas were prevalent e.g. the genre convention of a double journey, the influence of Paris Syndrome or the fact that both texts are retrospective accounts relying on memory,

both writer and speaker are creating their texts exophorically, both writer and speaker are female and outsiders to Paris and how this might influence representation and use of language

- Were able to offer precise discussion of purpose and audience going beyond 'young females', 'parents looking to take their children to Paris'; stronger responses understood that Nancy Miller is an American academic who has written previous works and, therefore, the audience may be fans of hers or older people who may have experienced growing up during the 1960s, or that Zara produced the text without a clear audience except her mother and the person recording, and the impact this had on her representation (e.g., the hedging used to mitigate her negative points so as not to cause offence to an unknown wider audience)
- Compared the differing modes with detailed exploration of spoken/written language features and their associated affordances and constraints – often weaved into discussion of language features and representation
- Compared the influence of the different time periods e.g. Paris as progressive in the 60s (but the Foyer still enforcing traditional gender expectations on women) compared with the "Disneyland" version Zara is more familiar with.

Common misunderstandings

- Front loaded a general formulaic introduction at the beginning of the response to cover AO3 without returning to it during the analysis or developing discussion in relation to representation or language use
- Adopted a very compartmentalised approach with a paragraph on representations and then a separate paragraph on an element of AO3 (e.g. context), but without acknowledging how representations were influenced by context, genre or mode
- Discussed the spoken mode of text B but without any comment on or comparison to the written mode of text A
- Used overly long textual examples and discussed these generally without focusing on specific features
- Mislabelled the syndetic list in text A as asyndetic, especially when quoting only the first part of the list
- Mislabelled 'one chilly afternoon' and 7:30' in text A as temporal deixis
- Mislabelled fillers as hedges in text B
- Misunderstood that Nancy Miller in text A was not a child when she went to study in Paris and that Monique was not her actual sister, not that Monique was not Parisian; or became focused on discussing Miller's youth in America (not part of the extract) at the expense of focusing on the extract

- Only compared the texts briefly at the beginning/end of the response
- Lacked exploration of representations, only focusing on how aspects of language were impacted by context, genre or mode but without exploring meaning
- Developed misconceptions about the intended audience of text B, not recognising its original closed audience of Zara's mother and the person recording
- Compared basic representations e.g. Miller's experiences as positive compared to Zara's experiences as negative.

Section B overall

What students did well

- Explored the extract effectively, evaluating the significance of the question focus (character/theme)
- Selected relevant language levels and explored/evaluated features and how they shaped meaning in relation to the question focus, using a range of accurate and precise terminology, across the whole response
- Explored in detail how meanings are shaped by writer's craft and use of narrative techniques such as narrative structure, narrative perspective and reliability, narrative voice, analepsis/flashbacks, prolepsis/flash forwards, stream of consciousness, foreshadowing, characterisation, hamartia, pathos, indirect speech, direct speech, dramatic irony, irony, symbolism, contrast and conflict, specific sensory imagery such as visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile or gustatory, extended metaphors, hyperbole etc
- Made relevant links to other parts of the novel in relation to the question focus, offering detailed evaluation of textual examples and language/literary features
- Offered analysis/evaluation of relevant genre/fantasy conventions and included relevant and thoughtful discussion of the contextual influences (of production and reception), linked to the specific question focus.

Common misunderstandings

- Didn't select and analyse specific language features, talking instead in more general terms about textual examples and what they showed – often described or explained these, sometimes paraphrasing the textual example. This was particularly noticeable in this section and was often seen in the textual selections outside of the extract
- Didn't understand the extract fully, leading to generalisations about character or theme

- Didn't link to other parts of the novel or made brief and general references, thus capping their mark at level 2
- If references to other parts of the novel were selected, textual references were sometimes not contextualised so did not clearly support the discussion of character/theme
- Did not address AO3 at all or in a minimal way, impacting their AO3 mark (out of 15 for this question).

Question 2

Explore the significance of characters' acts of destruction in the novel. You should consider:

- the presentation of characters' acts of destruction in the extract below and at different points in the novel
- the use of fantasy elements in constructing a fictional world.

What students did well

- Explored the extract effectively, evaluating the motivation behind the creature's act of destruction (nature vs nurture debate) and the significance of this
- Made relevant links to other parts of the novel such as the creature's killing of Elizabeth and/or Henry, Frankenstein's destruction of the second creature or even the creation of the creature as an act of destruction, as well as Frankenstein's self-destruction throughout the novel
- Offered analysis/evaluation of genre conventions such as gothic/fantasy elements, the influence of other gothic novels, the use of the epistolary form, and contextual factors such as Shelley's life experiences, the Romantics' view of good vs evil, Galvanism and how the acts of destruction might be received by contemporary and modern audiences, literary critical and non-academic readings of the novel.

Common misunderstandings

- Described how the act of destruction was shown as violent in the extract without addressing the significance aspect of the question
- Offered a simple view of the creature as evil and destructive rather than addressing the contributing factors
- Only focused on the creature's acts of destruction rather than addressing the wider focus of the question – *characters'* acts of destruction
- Mislabelled 'despair', 'exultation', 'triumph' and 'miseries' as adjectives rather than abstract nouns.

Question 3

Explore the significance of characters' desires for friendship in the novel. You should consider:

- the presentation of characters' desires for friendship in the extract below and at different points in the novel
- the use of fantasy elements in constructing a fictional world.

What students did well

- Explored the extract effectively, evaluating the motivation behind Walton's desire for friendship and the significance of this
- Made relevant links to other parts of the novel such as the creature's desire for friendship when observing the De Lacey family, Walton thinking of Victor as a friend in future letters, Victor's reaction to Henry's death
- Offered analysis/evaluation of genre conventions such as gothic/fantasy elements, the influences of other gothic novels, the use of the epistolary form, and contextual factors such as Shelley's life experiences, the Romantics' view of male friendships, how the need for friendship might be received by contemporary and modern audiences, literary critical and non-academic readings of the novel.

Common misunderstandings

- Described how Walton wishes for a friend in the extract without addressing the significance aspect of the question
- Only addressed Walton's desire for friendship rather than addressing the wider focus of the question – *characters'* desires for friendship
- Described friendships within the novel rather than addressing the *desires* aspect of the question or focused on characters' desires *in general* rather than *desires for friendship*.

Question 4

Explore the significance of the character of Dracula in the novel. You should consider:

- the presentation of the character of Dracula in the extract below and at different points in the novel
- the use of fantasy elements in constructing a fictional world.

What students did well

- Explored the extract effectively, evaluating the significance of the presentation of Dracula as supernatural, evil, controlling, manipulative and the significance of this;

could also evaluate other characters' reactions to Dracula as part of the characterisation

- Made relevant links to other parts of the novel such as Jonathan Harker's first meeting with Dracula, the Transylvanian locals' attitudes towards Dracula, Dracula's attacks on Lucy Westward, Dracula's influence over Renfield, Dracula's later attack on Mina or the final confrontation
- Offered analysis/evaluation of genre conventions such as gothic horror/fantasy elements, the influences of other gothic novels, the presentation of women as victims in 19th century, the fear of the foreign 'other' at the time of writing, literary critical and non-academic readings of the novel.

Common misunderstandings

- Described how Dracula is presented in the extract without addressing the significance aspect of the question
- Focused only on the appearance of Dracula rather than on wider aspects of characterisation such as behaviour, speech, response of other characters
- Mislabelled 'appalled' and bewildered' as verbs rather than adjectives.

Question 5

Explore the significance of characters' concerns for others in the novel. You should consider:

- the presentation of characters' concerns for others in the extract below and at different points in the novel
- the use of fantasy elements in constructing a fictional world.

What students did well

- Explored the extract effectively, evaluating the presentation of Mina's concern for Jonathan and the significance of this
- Made relevant links to other parts of the novel such as Jonathan Harker's first meeting with Dracula, the Transylvanian locals' attitudes towards Dracula, Dracula's attacks on Lucy Westward, Dracula's influence over Renfield, Dracula's later attack on Mina or the final confrontation
- Offered analysis/evaluation of genre conventions such as gothic horror/fantasy elements, the influences of other gothic novels, the presentation of women as victims in 19th century, the Victorian fear of the foreign 'other' at the time of writing, literary critical and non-academic readings of the novel.

Common misunderstandings

- Described how Mina's concern for Jonathan is presented in the extract without addressing the significance aspect of the question
- Only focused on Mina's concerns for others in other parts of the novel, rather than on the wider focus of the question – *characters'* concerns for others
- Focused on '*concerns*' as a more general concept rather than the focus of *concerns for others*, meaning selections and discussion was not focused.

Question 6

Explore the significance of acts of violence in Gilead in the novel. You should consider:

- the presentation of acts of violence in Gilead in the extract below and at different points in the novel
- the use of fantasy elements in constructing a fictional world.

What students did well

- Explored the extract effectively, evaluating the presentation of the act of violence from the Handmaids towards the accused man and the significance of this
- Made relevant links to other parts of the novel such as the presentation of the Aunts at the start to foreground the use of violence, Moira's punishment when she tries to escape, the Ceremonies as acts of violence, the bodies hanging on The Wall as punishment and deterrent, Ofglen's violence towards herself by taking her own life
- Explored the significance of Offred's narrative perspective of the act of violence in the extract and in other selected parts of the novel
- Offered analysis/evaluation of genre conventions such as dystopian setting and dystopian/fantasy elements, the importance of power dynamics within the storyworld, the influences of other dystopian novels, the influences on Atwood of 20th century repressive regimes, the influence of current world context in modern interpretations of the novel, literary critical and non-academic readings of the novel.

Common misunderstandings

- Described how the attack on the accused man is presented as violent in the extract without addressing the significance aspect of the question
- Did not understand Ofglen's motivation for being so violent (to put the member of Mayday out of his misery as quickly as possible)
- Described other physical acts of violence in the novel without considering the significance of them
- Mislabelled 'surge' as a verb rather than a noun, 'growling' as a verb rather than a noun, 'sharp' and 'painful' as adverbs rather than adjectives, 'arms, fists, feet' and

'shock, outrage, nausea' as syndetic lists rather than an asyndetic lists, 'Barbarism' as an adjective and a simple sentence rather than an abstract noun and a minor sentence.

Question 7

Explore the significance of motherhood in Gilead in the novel. You should consider:

- the presentation of motherhood in Gilead in the extract below and at different points in the novel
- the use of fantasy elements in constructing a fictional world.

What students did well

- Explored the extract effectively, evaluating the presentation of motherhood and the significance of this to both the Handmaids and Wives but also the division between these two groups
- Made relevant links to other parts of the novel such as Offred remembering reactions to a pregnant Handmaid, the visit to the doctor where he offers to help impregnate Offred, Offred's memories of her own daughter, the description of Serena Joy's garden as a metaphor for motherhood, Serena Joy showing Offred a photo of her daughter, Offred's willingness to go against the rules by having sex with Nick, Offred's interactions with her own mother
- Offered analysis/evaluation of genre conventions such as dystopian setting and dystopian/fantasy elements, the importance of reproduction within the storyworld, the influences of other dystopian novels, the influences on Atwood of 20th century repressive regimes, the influence of current world context in modern interpretations of the novel, literary critical and non-academic readings of the novel.

Common misunderstandings

- Described how motherhood is presented in the extract without addressing the significance aspect of the question
- Did not address the contrasting reactions of the Handmaids and the Wives to motherhood within the extract
- Described other descriptions of motherhood in the novel without considering the significance of them
- Mislabelled 'helplessly' as an adjective rather than an adverb, 'miserable' as an adverb rather than an adjective, 'twittering' as an adjective rather than a verb.

Question 8

Explore the significance of the character of Len Fenerman in the novel. You should consider:

- the presentation of Len Fenerman in the extract below and at different points in the novel
- the use of fantasy elements in constructing a fictional world.

What students did well

- Explored the extract effectively, evaluating the presentation of Len Fenerman and the significance of his character/how he is presented here
- Made relevant links to other parts of the novel such as Len Fenerman's visit to Mr Harvey's house, his presence at the memorial service, his affair with Abigail and his treatment of Jack's accusations of Mr Harvey
- Offered analysis/evaluation of genre conventions such as magic realism/crime & detective genre/gothic horror/fantasy, the fantasy genre narrator, Len's detective role and expectations of the police in the 1970s and today, late 20th century development of psychological profiling in police work, Propps's character theory, fidelity within marriage, the influence of Sebald's personal experiences, the context of reception of post 9/11 attack, literary critical and non-academic readings of the novel.

Common misunderstandings

- Described how Len Fenerman speaks and behaves in the extract without addressing the significance aspect of the question
- Did not understand how Len Fenerman is presented as different from the other police in the extract and the significance of this, seeing him rather as representative of all police in the novel
- Did not address how the development of his character (through revealing his tragic past and showing his commitment to his job and his lack of professionalism) and his interactions with Susie's family are influenced by the narrative perspective of Susie observing events on earth from her heaven
- Focused simply on Len Fenerman as the reason for Abigail having an affair.

Question 9

Explore the significance of the wider community in the novel. You should consider:

- the presentation of the wider community in the extract below and at different points in the novel
- the use of fantasy elements in constructing a fictional world.

What students did well

- Explored the extract effectively, evaluating the presentation of the wider community and the significance of their reactions
- Made relevant links to other parts of the novel such as Susie describing the community's response to her death, Susie's funeral, the way the neighbours offer support to the family, the community in Susie's heaven and how they support her
- Offered analysis/evaluation of genre conventions such as magic realism/suburban gothic/gothic horror/fantasy, the fantasy genre narrator, the influence of suburban American culture, Propp's character theory, the influence of Sebald's personal experiences, the context of reception of post 9/11 attack, literary critical and non-academic readings of the novel.

Common misunderstandings

- Described how the wider community behaves in the extract without addressing the significance aspect of the question
- Struggled to find other parts of the novel to discuss or described other characters' actions without linking these to the idea of community
- Misunderstood that Mr Botte was not leaving the memorial because he didn't want to be there but rather to make calls to ask others to attend.

Section C overall

What students did well

- Selected a second poem for analysis which was relevant to the question focus rather than as a comparative text
- Selected language levels relevant to the point being made, using accurate and precise terminology
- Did not compare poems, discussing each in detail in relation to the question focus
- Sustained discussion of the question focus rather than offering more generic discussion of the poems
- Maintained focus on the poetic voice and analysed/evaluated how the writer's craft was used to construct this
- Discussed phonological features with a clear focus on the effects created
- Were precise about structural features such as rhyme, rhythm, caesura and enjambment and the effects created by their use.

Common misunderstandings

- Included lengthy introductions or conclusions which repeated points made in the main response which added nothing and couldn't be credited
- Mentioned 'patterns of language' which doesn't push their AO1 mark into level 4 if they are only identified rather than explored; in particular, discussing 'semantic fields' of nouns/adjectives/verbs/adjectives, or not identifying the semantic field
- Identified structural features such as rhyme, metre, enjambment, caesura without textual examples or discussion of specific effects
- Did not make any selection from a second poem or chose a poem which didn't relate well to the question focus
- Offered a response based on what they know about the poems rather than in clear relation to the question focus
- Tried to forge connections between the poems when this isn't required or assessed in this question, often impacting the development of analysis of both poems
- Included redundant contextual information about the poets which isn't assessed
- Focused on the reader's/text receiver's response – AO3 (context of reception) is not assessed in this question.

Question 10

Examine how Donne presents the speaker's feelings of unhappiness in *The Triple Fool* and one other poem of your choice.

What students did well

- Explored the conceit of the fool in detail, analysing the self-deprecating poetic voice
- Narrowed down the cause of unhappiness and how this was expressed in different ways through nuanced changes of tone in the poetic voice – self-criticism, self-pity, bitterness towards the lover
- Selected a relevant second poem such as *Twickenham Garden*, *The Flea*, *The Apparition*, *The Canonization*, *A Jet Ring Sent* and analysed the second poem in relation to the question focus.

Common misunderstandings

- Focused on discussing *The Triple Fool* without leaving time to select and analyse a second poem beyond describing what it is about

- Offered a superficial discussion of the poem in general, without focusing on the poetic voice's different attitudes towards unhappiness, merely explaining the ways the poem shows the voice is unhappy.

Question 11

Examine how Donne presents events in *The Relic* and one other poem of your choice.

What students did well

- Focused on the imagined event in the poem (the opening of the grave) rather than offering a general reading of the named poem
- Focused on the poetic voice's attitudes towards the event and his lover.
- Selected a relevant second poem such as *The Apparition*, *The Flea*, *Elegy 19: To His Mistress Going To Bed*, *Twickenham Garden*, *Elegy 5: His Picture* and analysed the second poem in relation to the question focus.

Common misunderstandings

- Focused on discussing *The Relic* without leaving time to select and analyse a second poem beyond describing what it is about
- Didn't focus on the question focus: *events*, instead simply describing what happens in the poem, without a focus on poetic voice.

Question 12

Examine how Browning presents the speaker's feelings about particular places in '*De Gustibus* – ' and one other poem of your choice.

What students did well

- Focused on the speaker's feelings of connection with the different locations and how language was used to convey this connection
- Focused on the different descriptions of each place and how this was linked to the speaker's feelings
- Focused on the construction of poetic voice, even when this was identified as being likely to represent Browning's own feelings about the places in which he lived
- Selected a relevant second poem such as *Home-Thoughts, from Abroad* (most popular choice), *The Laboratory*, *Meeting at Night/Parting at Morning*, *My Last Duchess* and analysed the second poem in relation to the question focus.

Common misunderstandings

- Focused simply on how place is presented rather than engaging with the poetic voice/speaker's attitudes towards different places
- Focused on the place in the second stanza (Italy) without considering the first (England)
- Labelled adjectives inaccurately ('red-rusted', iron-spiked', 'fruit-o'ercrusted' as verbs rather than adjectives)
- Labelled sentence mood inaccurately ('Open my heart...' as declarative rather than imperative)
- Where *Home-Thoughts, from Abroad* was selected as the second poem (as it often was), labelled any reference to time as temporal deixis (such as 'April', 'May') and place as spatial deixis ('England')
- Struggled to discuss speaker's attitudes towards place in the second/chosen poem, instead focusing on events (particularly if they selected *Porphyria's Lover* or *My Last Duchess*)
- Focused on *De Gustibus* - and didn't leave time to select and analyse a second poem beyond describing what it was about

Question 13

Examine how Browning presents events in *The Laboratory* and one other poem of your choice.

What students did well

- Focused on the events in the poem (the making of the poison, the imagined event of poisoning the lover's lover)
- Focused on the poetic voice's feelings and attitudes towards the events and the language used to convey these
- Focused on the use of a dramatic monologue and characterisation of the poetic voice in relation to the question focus of events
- Selected a relevant second poem such as *My Last Duchess*, *Porphyria's Lover*, *Meeting at Night/Parting at Morning* and analysed the second poem in relation to the question focus.

Common misunderstandings

- Focused simply on describing the events rather than analysing the speaker's poetic voice's attitudes and feelings towards those events

- Described the poetic voice in the poems (named and chosen) without relating this discussion to the question focus: *events*
- Labelled lists inaccurately ('an earring, a casket, a signet, a fan-mount, a filigree basket' as syndetic instead of asyndetic, and 'and her breast and her arms and her hands' as asyndetic rather than polysyndetic)
- Focused on *The Laboratory* without leaving time to select and analyse a second poem beyond describing what it was about.

Question 14

Examine how Duffy presents attitudes to past experiences in *The Captain of the 1964 Top of the Form Team* and one other poem of your choice.

What students did well

- Understood and analysed the different tones of poetic voice when describing the past (optimistic, excited, certain, arrogant, in control) and present (disappointed, unfulfilled) to illuminate the speaker's attitudes towards past events
- Focused on the use of a dramatic monologue and the characterisation of the poetic voice through the language used to convey past events
- Selected a relevant second poem such as *Stafford Afternoons*, *Litany*, *Beachcomber*, *First Love*, *Never Go Back*, *Mean Time*, *Before You Were Mine* and analysed the second poem in relation to the question focus.

Common misunderstandings

- Focused simply on describing the character of the Captain rather than analysing attitudes and feelings towards past events, often discussing the poem line by line
- Labelled lists inaccurately (such as the asyndetic list in stanza 1 of the song titles and the asyndetic list in stanza 3 – 'The blazer. The badge. The Tie')
- Labelled sentence types inaccurately ('I want it back' and 'The Nile rises in April' as minor rather than simple sentences, and 'My country', 'No snags' and 'The clever smell of my satchel' as simple rather than minor sentences)
- Labelled 'fizzing hope' inaccurately (fizzing as a verb rather than an adjective)
- Selected *Before You Were Mine* as a second poem and simply described the mother's past rather than analysing the speaker's attitudes towards the mother's past events
- Selected *Stafford Afternoons* as a second poem and tried to compare a past remembered fondly (in the named poem) with a traumatic past experience; these comparisons led to undeveloped analysis of either poem.

Question 15

Examine how Duffy presents the speaker's attitudes towards others in *First Love* and one other poem of your choice.

What students did well

- Explored the presentation of the speaker's different attitudes towards their first love (longing, obsession, disappointment) and how these were conveyed through language choices throughout the poem
- Explored how the speaker's attitude is shaped by memory and the significance of this
- Explored the use of similes and metaphors used throughout the poem, offering detailed evaluation of these (such as the 'garden shaking with light' and 'an old film played at a slow speed')
- Focused on the construction of poetic voice, even when this was identified as possibly being representative of Duffy's own experiences
- Selected a relevant second poem such as *The Biographer*, *Close*, *Litany*, *Never Go Back*, *Before You Were Mine* and analysed the second poem in relation to the question focus.

Common misunderstandings

- Focused on simply describing what happens in the poem, line by line, rather than selecting language and points relevant to the question focus: *the speaker's attitudes towards others*
- Labelled lists inaccurately (such as 'in windows of changing sky, in mirrors, my lover's eyes' as syndetic rather than asyndetic)
- Labelled 'dead' as a noun or verb instead of adjective
- Selected *Before You Were Mine* as a second poem and simply described the mother's past rather than analysing the speaker's attitudes towards the mother.

Question 16

Examine how Heaney presents feelings of loss in *Mid-Term Break* and one other poem of your choice.

What students did well

- Explored the speaker's feelings (embarrassment, responsibility, sadness) about the loss of the younger brother and how these contrast to the family's feelings, discussing the significance of the age of the speaker at the time of the loss (creating the detached, observational poetic voice as a coping mechanism)
- Explored how the speaker's feelings change from detachment/denial through to acceptance
- Explored the concept of loss of innocence as well as the loss of the brother, and how this was conveyed through language choices
- Focused on the construction of poetic voice, even when this was identified as being an autobiographical poem
- Selected a relevant second poem such as *Blackberry-Picking*, *Death of a Naturalist*, *Punishment*, *Hailstones*, *Strange Fruit*, *Follower* and analysed the second poem in relation to the question focus.

Common misunderstandings

- Focused on describing what happens in the poem, line by line, rather than *on feelings of loss*
- Included detailed contextual information about Heaney which is not assessed for this question
- Inaccurately labelled references to time as temporal deixis ('two o'clock', 'ten o'clock')
- Identified enjambment as a structural feature in the named poem without using a specific example and exploring the specific impact of its use
- Focused on *Mid-Term Break* without leaving time to select and analyse a second poem beyond describing what it was about
- Where poems such as *Punishment* or *Strange Fruit* were selected as second poems, included lots of contextual historical information which is not assessed on this question.

Question 17

Examine how Heaney presents the speaker's memories of events in *Blackberry-Picking* and one other poem of your choice.

What students did well

- Explored the use of the retrospective poetic voice to present the speaker's memories of the events in the named poem (the annual picking of blackberries) and how this event is symbolic of the loss of innocence
- Explored the childish poetic voice when describing the events at first and how this changes to a more mature poetic voice who recognises the naivety of childhood and the changing use of language to reflect this
- Explored the specific question focus – the *memories* of events, rather than simply describing the events
- Explored the importance of the natural world for the speaker and how this is constructed through language choices
- Focused on the construction of the poetic voice, even when this was identified as being an autobiographical poem
- Selected a relevant second poem such as *Digging*, *Follower*, *Death of a Naturalist*, *Mid-Term Break*, *Night Drive*, *Hailstones*, *The Otter* and analysed the second poem in relation to the question focus.

Common misunderstandings

- Described the events in the poem, line by line, rather than selecting textual examples more judiciously with a focus on memories of events
- Offered a surface-level discussion of the events of childhood without recognising the change in feelings and what these represent (loss of innocence)
- Selected *Death of a Naturalist* as the second poem and, again, simply discussed the events without exploring the fact these are memories of events or evaluating the speaker's feelings towards the events
- Included irrelevant contextual information about Heaney's childhood in Ireland when this is not assessed in this question.

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