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# Moderators' Report/ Principal Moderator Feedback

January 2022

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE  
In English Literature (4ET1)  
Paper 3: Modern Drama and Literary Heritage  
Texts

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## Introduction

Candidates produced two coursework assignments, the titles of which were self-generated or devised by their teachers.

**Assignment A (Modern Drama):** This was based on a modern drama text chosen from the set list in the specification. Two Assessment Objectives were equally targeted:

AO1: Candidates demonstrate a close knowledge of the text and maintain an informed, critical personal engagement (15 marks)

AO2: Candidates analyse language, form and structure used by the writer to create meanings and effects (15 marks).

**Assignment B (Literary Heritage):** This was based on a Literary Heritage text chosen from the set list in the specification. Candidates were assessed on AO1 and AO2 (10+10 marks). Candidates were also expected to show an understanding of the relationships between texts and their contexts for AO4 (10 marks).

The guidance for length of assignments was 600 to 1000 words for each one.

## General Comments

There was a range in the quality of the responses as well as the tasks set by centres. The best responses were those where candidates showed a degree of independence and developed their own personal response to texts. It was gratifying to see evidence of this even during the difficult time of Covid restrictions. However, there was also evidence of some very narrative responses which did not cover the required Assessment Objectives and had been over-rewarded by centres.

## Setting a task

The choice of title set by the centre was often seen to affect the outcomes of the candidate: titles which led them to consider the writers' craft and set a challenge led to a more perceptive critical style and personal engagement. Where the task set had a clear focus which was not too broad the candidates found it easier to avoid descriptive and narrative responses.

Some good examples from the January cohort of the type of task which elicited well-focused responses were:

- Assignment A - Modern Drama
  - *'Explore the way Miller uses dramatic devices to present Catherine's development in A View from the Bridge'*
  - *'With reference to language and dramatic techniques, explore the ways in which Priestley presents the potential for change in An Inspector Calls'*

- Assignment B – Literary Heritage Texts
  - *'Taking into consideration the relationship of the play and its context, explore how Shakespeare presents the theme of friendship in The Merchant of Venice.'*
  - *'Explore the ways in which Shakespeare uses language, form and structure to present the theme of deception in Macbeth.'*

Less successful responses were often as a result of an unfocused question which did not lead to the candidate covering the set Assessment Objectives.

Titles such as: *'Was the Inspector real in An Inspector Calls?'* (Assignment A Modern Drama – Priestley) and *'How did Beatrice prove to be a loving wife?'* (Assignment A Modern Drama – Miller) elicited good personal responses but did not lead to effective coverage of AO2 (language, form and structure) which is worth half of the marks.

Vague, descriptive titles like *'How does Jane Austen make a memorable character?'* (Assignment B – Literary Heritage Texts) and *'Conflict in Macbeth.'* (Assignment B – Literary Heritage Texts) tended to produce a narrative response as the candidates struggled to maintain a critical approach.

It should be noted that the use of tasks taken from the alternative exam unit (4ETI 02) such as: *'Explore the theme of loyalty in Romeo and Juliet.'* or *'To what extent are lessons learnt in An Inspector Calls?'*, whilst perfectly adequate for a 45 minute exam response, may not lend themselves to a sustained analysis of AO2 which is expected in the coursework unit where candidates have more time to develop their critical skills and cover the relevant assessment objectives in a much more thorough and considered way.

### **Assignment A**

The most popular texts chosen for Modern Drama were *A View from the Bridge* and *An Inspector Calls*. It was refreshing to see one centre choose *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* but the title set *'How does Stephens reveal Christopher's autism to us?'* led more to an analysis of his needs and behaviour rather than an analysis of dramatic techniques and their impact on the audience. A better wording of this task would have been: *'How does Stephens use Christopher's special needs to add dramatic tension in the play?'*

Many responses appeared to be based on past examination questions, which though adequate did not always challenge the candidates sufficiently. Tasks which asked **how** the writer achieved effects produced responses more focused on AO2 e.g. *'Explore the ways in which Priestley uses dramatic devices to present the mysterious inspector in An Inspector Calls.'* This is more focused than the descriptive title: *'Eddie's enmity towards young Rodolfo in A View From The Bridge.'*

Effectively analysing the playwright's methods and considering the audience reaction should form part of AO2 analysis for play scripts, and stronger responses were those where the text was seen as a performance with dramatic techniques and their impact on the audience being considered.

This is an example of a **level 5** response to *An Inspector Calls* showing cohesive evaluation of language, form and structure, including consideration of dramatic effects:

*"The audience views Gerald as an ambiguous character: upon the Inspector's arrival, he remarks 'I don't come into this suicide business' and appears a respectable, loving fiancé. But here Priestley is using foreshadowing to hint at Gerald's prejudice and naivety. Later, at the beginning of Act 2, when questioned he comes across as a misogynistic aristocrat when he refers to 'hard-eyed, dough-faced women' showing that he objectifies them as commodities. Through his colloquial criticism the audience comes to realise that he lacks empathy and believes that women have no worth. Here Priestley is exploring the idea that Gerald abuses the power of his class to cheat and manipulate women. Dramatic irony is used when Gerald criticises Alderman Meggarty as a predatory villain, having behaved in the same way himself to Daisy. Thus Priestley paints Gerald as a hypocrite who cannot accept social responsibility. It is only on the discovery of Daisy's death that he momentarily becomes sympathetic and acknowledges his faults. He speaks in hyperbolic sentences: 'She didn't blame me at all. I wish to God she had now.' His short sentences highlight the distress and guilt he feels at this point albeit short-lived."*

Many candidates covered AO4 (context) for the Modern Drama response, although this is not required. This can lead to a greater understanding of the writer's intentions but it is important that any AO4 comment in assignment A is made relevant to the task and not used as a historical introduction.

This is an example of a **level 5** response to *A View From The Bridge* where knowledge of historical context has been used effectively alongside analysis of AO2 to further exhibit assured knowledge and understanding of the text:

*"Miller's use of structure in the play puts Eddie, the tragic hero, pivotal to all the action and ensures that the audience follows him to his downfall. At the beginning of the play Miller presents him as a dedicated Sicilian husband of the 1950s who provides for and protects his family in a time when many longshoremen migrated to America to improve their lives, living 'a life that is hard and even' as Alfieri tells the audience. He is presented as a respected father by his dedicated wife Beatrice who sees him as an 'angel', and his friends who view him as a hero to 'whom a lot of credit is coming'. Much of Eddie's respect*

*comes from not breaking the rules of community and reminding his family never to say a word that might betray them to the American authority: 'You see nothing, you hear'. However, this rather perfect image of him which initially attracted the audience's hearts is gradually reversed as Eddie gives in to his male pride and excessive protectiveness over his niece Catherine which leads him to betray his family and thus deserve the wrath of the whole community."*

## **Assignment B**

For Literary Heritage Texts, *Macbeth* was the most popular text choice. One centre chose *Pride and Prejudice* and one centre offered *The Merchant of Venice*. Where two plays were chosen for study, the lack of AO2 coverage, particularly dramatic techniques, became more noticeable. Most candidates wrote more successfully about narrative techniques in prose texts when these were chosen for study.

Most candidates produced thoughtful responses and attempts were made to link the text with context to cover the requirement for AO4. There were, however, some responses which included substantial biographical detail on Shakespeare which was irrelevant to the task in hand and not integrated into the main body of the response. Often the comment on context (AO4) was not integrated well and served as a biographical or historical introduction rather than being detailed and sustained.

Here is an example of a **level 5** response to *Pride and Prejudice* where the relationship between text and context has been integrated convincingly alongside analysis of AO2 (analysis of language, form and structure):

*"Mr Darcy's more disagreeable side is not only reflected through his actions: Austen illustrates his character to us through the regular use of the narrative style free indirect discourse where the narration reflects the views of Elizabeth without stating so e.g 'His character was decided, he was the most disagreeable man in the world'. Here Austen's use of hyperbole and free indirect discourse gives us a clear insight into Elizabeth's thought and feelings about Mr Darcy at this point in the novel, which are reflected onto us the reader. In this way Austen sets us up for the dramatic reveal of the true positive side to his nature later in the novel when the omniscient narrator disagrees with Elizabeth's views and failures in judgement. We begin to see this in Mr Darcy's letter when we find that there is more to Mr Wickham than meets the eye. In the era Austen lived, epistolary novels were prevalent and a favourite of hers. This was because letters were relevant in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and an essential means of communication between friends and family. Austen's novel contains many letters to show the reader an unbiased perspective of a character. An example of*

*this is Mr Darcy's letter to Elizabeth after his proposal to her goes horribly wrong. The letter is paramount as it is his first chance to explain his actions before we and Elizabeth draw a hasty conclusion. In this way Austen uses the letter to address Mr Darcy's defects and strengths, and also reveal Mr Wickham's unscrupulous character."*

As in assignment A, titles which were focused on the writer's craft and were not too wide, proved most successful. Titles such as: *'The treatment of love in The Merchant of Venice'*, *'Jane Austen allows the reader to see two different sides to Mr Darcy. How far do you agree?'* and *'Was Macduff the foil of Banquo?'* are too wide ranging for the candidate to focus specifically on the relevant Assessment Objectives, particularly AO2, and often led to descriptive answers lacking in a discriminating and perceptive critical style.

Titles such as: *'Explore the ways in which Shakespeare uses language, form and structure to present the theme of deception in Macbeth'* proved to be more successful in eliciting focused responses which considered the playwright's intentions as well as his craft. The title set by one centre on *The Merchant of Venice*: *'Explore how Shakespeare presents the theme of friendship in the play'* was quite challenging but produced some well-considered responses which explored both male and female characters and their relationships.

The most successful responses in this section are those which manage to cover all three Assessment Objectives equally, making AO4 (consideration of the relationship between the text and its context) relevant to the topic set in the task. For successful coverage of AO2, responses need to consider the use of dramatic or narrative techniques and their impact on the audience or reader. Many candidates wrote about Shakespeare's use of imagery and iambic/trochaic meter but forgot to consider the play as a performance with an audience.

Less successful responses used over long quotations to support points and lacked close analysis of AO2 (language, form and structure) as shown in this extract from a **level 3** response on *Macbeth*:

*"When Macbeth committed the murder and became the king of Scotland, Banquo felt terrible but did nothing about it. He just said passively aside: 'New honours came upon him like our strange garments, cleave not to their mould but with the aid of use'. The imagery used here by Banquo is a metaphor showing that he preferred the rule of Duncan and that he felt Macbeth was not at all suitable to become king of Scotland. Macbeth had shown himself to be a brave warrior in the in the battle: 'Brave Macbeth, well he deserves that name!', but later Banquo shows he suspects him of murdering Duncan: 'Thou hast it all now: king, Cawdor, Glamis, as the weird sisters promised and I fear thou playedst most foully for 't. This leads to*

*Macbeth fearing Banquo who used to be his friend and he says: 'our fears in Banquo stick deep' which leads to him plotting Banquo's murder."*

Here the textual references, though fully relevant, have been used merely to support the line of argument rather than analyse language and its effect on the audience.

A few centres have started to submit responses which refer to critical sources e.g. quotations from critics such as Bradley or Coot. It should be noted that this is not required for this unit and is not a substitute for the candidate's own critical opinion. Also, where a centre is asking candidates to submit a bibliography, any references to these sources should be checked carefully to ensure that the ideas have not been directly lifted so as to avoid plagiarism.

However, it should be noted that the knowledge and understanding of the texts studied (AO1) was often a strong point even in weaker candidates, and centres should be congratulated on this during times of remote learning and self-isolation which has often reduced teaching time.

### **Administration**

There was evidence in some centres that the new system of electronic submission of coursework on the LWA was not completely understood: some authentication/cover sheets and EDI print outs were missing, and many of the folders were uploaded after the deadline of 10<sup>th</sup> January. In many cases folders had been uploaded to the LWA site but the centre had not pressed the 'Submit Request' button so that the files were submitted. If the submission is still showing as 'Pending' it means that the folders have been uploaded on the system but not sent through to the moderator so cannot be accessed.

It is still a requirement that the necessary paperwork be uploaded with the centre's sample of scripts: EDI print out, front cover sheet (signed and annotated with marks awarded and summative comments) and authentication sheet (signed). Moderators do need to check details against the information held on Gateway so it is important that the folder cover sheet is submitted with the work and completed with candidate and centre numbers. The work of the highest and lowest candidate must also be included even if these do not appear on Gateway as part of the sample.

All work should show evidence of teacher marking. Although the majority of centres provided detailed comments on the assignments, there were some centres who submitted clean scripts. The comments, both marginal and summative, should link to the wording of the Assessment Objectives in the mark scheme. Some centres did not appear to accurately apply the marking criteria to explain how marks were attained. Comments such as 'assured', 'perceptive' and



'sophisticated' were used on level 3 assignments and subjective comments like 'Beautiful summing up', 'Excellent understanding', 'Perfect point! Well done!' appeared on some scripts addressed to the student.

Some centres showed evidence of good practice in carrying out dual marking with two sets of comments appearing on the scripts. One centre had submitted a separate moderator sheet linking the comments to the relevant Assessment Objectives on the mark scheme. **Where internal moderation had taken place, the marking was usually a lot more accurate.** A few centres have adopted the practice of highlighting the scripts in different colours to show where they feel the Assessment Objectives have been covered. This is very helpful to show how marks have been awarded but the highlighting must relate accurately to the wording of the mark scheme e.g a page reference linked to a quotation does not constitute close analysis of structure.

It was rewarding to see some very strong personal engagement across the ability range of the candidates and to read thoughtful responses often produced under difficult circumstances. Centres should be congratulated for setting individual tasks which allowed the candidates to choose titles to suit their strengths and knowledge.

### **A brief summary**

It is important that the centres take into account the following:

- The importance of setting a task which is sufficiently challenging and related to all the relevant Assessment Objectives for the assignment
- All questions set should be tightly focused and allow the candidate to develop a personal response as well as analyse language, form and structure
- It is important that candidates are presented with a range of topics and ideas, and are encouraged to choose ones that appeal, thus encouraging personal engagement and independence
- The analysis of drama texts should focus closely on dramatic techniques, audience reaction and stagecraft
- It is important that AO4 (the relationship between text and context) is well integrated into the response and relates fully to the question set. Substantial biographical detail on any of the writers is irrelevant and detracts from the task in hand.
- The guidance for each assignment is 600 -1000 words. Quantity does not always mean quality, and unnecessary narrative or historical detail can detract from the core of the response. However, in order to cover all the Assessment Objectives sufficiently responses need to be developed and sustained.
- The best practice is to internally standardise all marking even if there is only one teacher teaching the specification. Small centres in the same geographical region should share good practice.
- Scripts should show evidence of teacher marking with comments that relate to the wording of the marking criteria and refer to relevant

Assessment Objectives. Looking at the Board's exemplar scripts for this unit should provide greater guidance for small or new centres.

- All folders should be submitted with the centre's EDI printout and signed authentication forms.