

## Love through the ages: Exemplar student response (AS Paper 1, Section B)

---

This resource is an exemplar student response to a Section B question in the specimen assessment materials for AS Paper 1.

### Paper 1, Section B, Band 4

#### Sample question

Examine the view that Richard Lovelace presents the speaker in this poem as having a selfish attitude to love.

#### Sample response

The poem 'The Scrutiny' by Richard Lovelace presents the idea that some men believe that they should have the chance to 'explore' with many other women before settling down. The poem takes on a sarcastic and ironic tone, as it is a cavalier poem and is supposed to be easier to relate to. This tone suggests that Lovelace believes those who have this attitude are selfish and that this is the incorrect attitude to have to love.

In the first line of the poem, "Why should you swear I am forsworn", it is clear that Lovelace is trying to portray the speaker as feeling as though they are superior to their love. The word 'forsworn' suggests that the speaker believes that they should be allowed to act as they please and therefore their actions are not sins or unacceptable. This rhetorical tone, which is carried on to the lines "since thine I vowed to be? Lady, it is already morn", suggests a lack of respect for the woman, as the speaker is clearly being sarcastic and is therefore mocking in response to her. The tone is present in the entire stanza, which last lines consist of "and 'twas last night I swore to thee that fond impossibility" where Lovelace has exaggerated a small amount of time to represent the speaker's selfish ideas as they believe they should not have to prove their love, if they've already "swore to thee". The sarcastic tone implies a lack of respect or care for the listener, whom has clearly declared their love and also worry for the speaker and his selfish attitudes.

The second stanza continues this sarcastic tone as the speaker talks of loving the listener "much and long", as if the act is tiresome and a chore. The selfishness of the speaker is presented here as they are only thinking of themselves, and the effort it is to show someone you care, instead of thinking about how his partner feels. The reference to a "tedious twelve hours space" represents the listener's

impatience with the speaker, as the speaker believes that he should not have to continually declare his feelings.

Lovelace uses the aspect of arrogance in selfishness to reinforce the theme of the poem. The speaker talks of how he would be doing “all other beauties wrong” if he were to stay with the same person. This shows how the speaker only thinks of himself and the way that he would be perceived to other women. It also shows the high opinion of himself that he upholds, as he thinks it would be worse to deprive other women of him instead of caring for one woman only.

Throughout the poem, the speaker objectifies women and refers to them in ways that would suggest sexist ideas. Lovelace presents the speaker as only caring about the outside appearance of his lovers, “I must search for the black and fair”, proving that he does not actually care for them or care about their personality. Lovelace then goes on to describe the women as “treasure” and “spoils” as if the women are there to be discovered by him and that they play no other role in life. These nouns also imply that the speaker, again, only cares about the outward appearance of the women that he is involved with, as the word “treasure” has connotations of beauty and high worth when it comes to its appearance. The word “spoils” suggests that love is just a game for the speaker, and that the women he is involved with are merely objects to show his success in his conquests, and it doesn’t matter who they are as long as they prove his point.

The idea that Lovelace is portraying the speaker as seeing love as a game is reinforced by the first line of the last stanza, which reads “When I have loved my round”, where the abstract noun “rounds” suggest that love is only for entertainment, and that it does not involve feelings or emotion. This idea is, again, selfish, as it shows that the speaker has no care for how other people involved feel, as they are just pawns in this game.

The last stanza is the most important in presenting the selfishness of the speaker, as it shows how the speaker believes that he has the choice of women and that he deserves to have all his loves wait for him whilst he compares them. Lovelace writes “thou provest the pleasant she” and then “I laden return to thee”, showing that the speaker is not in love with the woman listening, as he needs her to prove herself to him, and only then will he return. The speaker is not taking the listener’s feelings or other intentions into account as he is only concentrating on himself and the game he wishes to play. If the speaker did not love the listener, he would not be so arrogant as to believe that he is superior to her and that she will wait for him. He also would not dismiss her emotions or want to be “sated with variety” as she would be his only desire.

In conclusion, it is clear that Lovelace feels strongly about those who possess qualities such as those possessed by the speaker. Lovelace has exaggerated the common ideas and beliefs of men in the 1600s due to the patriarchal society, and used a sarcastic and mocking tone, common in earlier poems, to represent the lack of respect shown to women. Lovelace has objectified women throughout the poem and provided a lot of evidence to show that many men concentrate

solely on the appearance of women, whilst their feelings and emotions come second. The speaker is shown to find affection and examples of true love as “tedious” and “long” showing the lack of interest in their partner’s feelings.

## Examiner commentary

Overall this response is characterised by the Band 4 qualities of coherence and thoroughness. There are some Band 5 qualities such as assuredness and sophistication emerging but this response fits best with the upper part of Band 4.

A01- A thorough argument is sustained where ideas are explored in depth using appropriate register and terminology.

A02- Again, the answer is thorough and authorial methods such as language are clearly engaged with and understood. The attention to the voice of the speaker is helpful. The sophisticated argument that Lovelace is being ironic in his presentation of the speaker is interesting but not convincingly supported.

A03- There is a coherent argument about the significance of time, gender and genre in this answer.

A04 and A05- The candidate reveals an implicit appreciation of Cavalier poetry in their treatment of A04 and there is a sustained and thorough approach to the debate set up in the task.

Overall this is an upper Band 4 script.