
A-level
ENGLISH LITERATURE A
(7712/2B)

Paper 2B: Texts in Shared Contexts: Modern Times: Literature from
1945 to the Present Day

Mark scheme

Specimen Material

Version/Stage: Version 3.0

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 Assessment Writer.

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.

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

Paper 2B Mark Scheme

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

The significance of Open Book

1. Examiners must understand that in marking an Open Book exam there are examining implications. Candidates have their texts in front of them, and they are expected to use them to focus on specific passages for detailed discussion. They will not have had to memorise quotations, so when quotations are used they should be accurate. Because candidates have their texts in the examination room, examiners need to be alert to possible malpractice. The texts should not be annotated but if examiners suspect that they have been or that notes from texts have been copied, they must alert the malpractice team.

There are specific issues for AO2 – how meanings are shaped in texts. There is, with Open Book, the expectation that candidates can use the text they have in front of them to make specific and detailed reference to structural and organisational issues.

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. In all questions more weight should be given to AO1, AO2 and AO3 than to AO4 and AO5. 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 7. 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 the examiner is 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.
14. Examiners need to bear in mind the following key points when marking questions connecting two texts:
- has the candidate focused on the central historicist literary concept set up in the question and referred to two texts?
 - has the candidate engaged in a relevant debate or constructed a relevant argument around the two texts?
 - has the candidate considered the writers' authorial methods in the two texts?
 - has the candidate adhered to the rubric?
 - has the candidate given substantial coverage of two texts?
 - the candidate's AO1 competence.

Annotation

15. Examiners should remember that annotation is directed solely to senior examiners.
16. 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.
17. Please remember that scripts can go back to candidates, so although the audience is a senior examiner, views must be expressed temperately.
18. The following symbols can be used when marking scripts:
- tick for a good point, idea, reference etc
 - tick in brackets for a potentially good point, not fully made
 - underlining for an error in fact or expression
 - D when a candidate is describing content
 - R for repetition
 - I for irrelevance
 - ? for when meaning is not clear

Examiners should not use private systems, as these will mean nothing to senior examiners. If examiners are in doubt about what to use, simply write clear comments.

19. Use the Model Marked Script for guidance.

The Assessment Objectives and their significance

20. All questions are framed to test AOs 2, 3, 4 and 5, so if candidates answer the question, 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, in the main, are 18 years old so we are judging their skills at the end of 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> perceptive understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task assured engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> perceptive exploration of connections across literary texts arising out of historicist study 	
	AO5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> perceptive and confident engagement with the debate set up in the task 	

<p>Band 4 Coherent/ Thorough 16-20 marks</p> <p>'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.</p> <p>'Thoroughness' is shown when students write carefully, precisely and accurately.</p>	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> thorough understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task thorough engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> logical and consistent exploration of connections across literary texts arising out of historicist study 	
	AO5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> thorough engagement with the debate set up in the task 	
<p>Band 3 Straightforward/ Relevant 11-15 marks</p> <p>'Straightforward' work is shown when students make their ideas in relation to the task clearly known.</p>	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<p>This band is characterised by straightforward and relevant work where the student's response to the task is clear and intelligible.</p> <p>At the top of the band students will demonstrate consistent straightforward understanding in the course of their argument. Ideas will be developed relevantly.</p> <p>At the bottom of the band there will be flashes of relevant understanding with evidence of</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> straightforward understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task relevant engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> straightforward understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation 	

<p>'Relevant' work is shown when students are focused on the task and use detail in an appropriate and supportive way.</p>		<p>to the task</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relevant connections between those contexts and the historicist literary concept studied 	<p>straightforward thinking.</p>
	AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explores connections across literary texts arising out of historicist study in a straightforward way 	
	AO5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • straightforward engagement with the debate set up in the task 	
<p>Band 2 Simple/Generalised 6-10 marks</p> <p>'Simple' work is shown when students write in an unelaborated and basic way in relation to the task.</p> <p>'Generalised' work is shown when students write without regard to particular details.</p>	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>This band is characterised by simple and generalised work which is mainly linked to the task.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>At the bottom of the band there will be inconsistency, but the beginnings of a simple and generalised understanding.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task • generalised engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple exploration of connections across literary texts arising out of historicist study 	
	AO5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple and generalised response to the debate set up in the task 	

<p>Band 1 Largely irrelevant/largely misunderstood/largely inaccurate 1-5 marks</p> <p>‘Largely irrelevant’ work is shown when students write in an unclear way with only occasional reference to what is required by the question.</p> <p>‘Largely misunderstood’ and ‘largely inaccurate’ work is shown when knowledge of the text is insecure, hazy and often wrong.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>At the bottom of the band there will be no connection with the task; the writing will be hard to follow and irrelevant.</p>
<p>0 marks</p>		<p>No marks for response when nothing is written or where response has no connection to the text(s) or task.</p>	

Section A**Option 1: Poetry Set Text****Question 01*****Feminine Gospels* – Carol Ann Duffy**

‘The title of the collection suggests Duffy’s agenda is to challenge traditional male ideas about the “gospel truth”.’

Examine this view.

[25 marks]

Possible content:

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

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

As this is an Open Book examination, it is expected that students pay close attention to the methods used by writers to achieve their effects and use detailed and accurate quotations to support their points. Students may focus on:

- aspects of poetic form and genre
- aspects of structure, eg use of stanzas
- aspects of language, eg rhyme, rhythm, imagery and other ideas not typically associated with religion

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

In exploring changing ideas about women students will be engaging with not only the specific context of modern literature from 1945 to the present day but the contexts of when texts were written and how they have been received. Students might focus on:

- how attitudes to gender are expressed within this poetry collection and how this reflects changing attitudes over time
- potential readings of ‘gospels’ as different kinds of process

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts.

In exploring changing ideas about women, students will be connecting with the representation of one of the central issues of modern literature. Answers to this question should be framed by a wider understanding of concepts from their connective reading in this area. For example, students may focus on issues on:

- representations of gender in other reading
- representations of power and patriarchy in other reading

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

Some students will agree with the proposition set up in the task and focus on one or two of the following issues:

- female subjects and themes foregrounded in titles such as ‘The Long Queen’, ‘The Map Woman’, etc
- connotations of ‘feminine’ and possible ironies surrounding words used to describe women
- connotations of ‘gospels’, religious and otherwise
- significance of both words to the subjects of the poems
- significance of both words to describe the voices adopted
- significance of both words to the poetic methods employed
- poems that best suit the description ‘Feminine Gospels’
- explicit and implicit religious references

Some will disagree and focus on one or two of the following issues:

- Duffy’s various attempts to present female voices as not typically feminine
- poems that seem to be atypical and at odds with the other ‘Feminine Gospels’

Accept any valid interpretations, any valid comments on contexts of production and reception and any relevant integrated comment on poetic methods that are embedded into the argument.

Question 02***Feminine Gospels* – Carol Ann Duffy**

Examine the view that this collection ‘excludes men as subjects and makes no attempt to engage them as readers’.

[25 marks]

Possible content:

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

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

As this is an Open Book examination, it is expected that students pay close attention to the methods used by writers to achieve their effects and use detailed and accurate quotations to support their points. Students may focus on:

- aspects of poetic form and genre
- aspects of structure, eg use of stanzas
- aspects of language, eg rhyme, rhythm, imagery
- methods that might be described as ‘friendly’ to women
- methods that might arguably appeal to men

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

In exploring changing ideas about women, students will be engaging with not only the specific context of modern literature from 1945 to the present day but the contexts of when texts were written and how they have been received. Students might focus on:

- how attitudes to gender are expressed within this poetry collection and how this reflects changing attitudes over time
- the extent to which specifically men are represented and what these representations suggest

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts.

In exploring changing ideas about gender, students will be connecting with the representation of one of the central issues of modern literature. Answers to this question should be framed by a wider understanding of concepts from their connective reading in this area. For example, students may focus on issues on:

- representations of gender in other reading

- representations of power and patriarchy in other reading

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

Some students will agree with the proposition set up in the task and focus on one or two of the following issues:

- poems in the first person from a woman's point of view
- references made to other women, real or imagined
- expressions of animosity to men
- use of references, subject matters and themes likely to appeal to women, eg 'The Diet'

Some will disagree and focus on one or two of the following issues:

- poems that appear to be male voices, eg 'Sub'
- references to men, real or imagined
- expressions of affection, respect or goodwill towards men
- references, subject matters and themes that might appeal to men

Accept any valid interpretations, any valid comments on contexts of production and reception and any relevant integrated comment on poetic methods that are embedded into the argument.

Question 03***Skirrid Hill* – Owen Sheers**

‘In *Skirrid Hill* relationships are frail, fragile, falling apart.’

Examine this view of Sheers’ presentation of relationships in the collection.

[25 marks]

Possible content:

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

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

As this is an Open Book examination, it is expected that students pay close attention to the methods used by writers to achieve their effects and use detailed and accurate quotations to support their points. Students may focus on:

- aspects of poetic form and genre
- aspects of structure, eg use of stanzas
- aspects of language, eg rhyme, rhythm, imagery
- methods that might suggest frailty/fragility
- poems that appear to be more structured and cohesive in their methods

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

In exploring ideas about difficult relationships, students will be engaging with not only the specific context of modern literature from 1945 to the present day but the contexts of when texts were written and how they have been received. Students might focus on:

- how difficulties in relating to others are expressed within this poetry collection and how this reflects changing attitudes over time
- ideas about different kinds of relationships and their strength/fragility

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts.

In exploring difficult relationships, students will be connecting with the representation of one of the central issues of modern literature. Answers to this question should be framed by a wider understanding of concepts from their connective reading in this area. For example, students may focus on issues on:

- representations of difficult personal relationships in other reading

- representations of difficult relationships with the wider community, culture or society as a whole in other reading

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

Some students will agree with the proposition set up in the task and focus on one or two of the following issues:

- poems about apparently disintegrating human relationships – lovers or family members, eg ‘The Wake’
- poems about literal or metaphorical frailty/fragility
- poems about death and disintegration such as ‘Mametz Wood’
- poems that do not readily connect with others in the collection

Some will disagree and focus on one or two of the following issues:

- poems with settings outside of the immediate Skirrid Hill area or outside Wales
- poems about love and harmony between people, such as ‘Winter Swans’
- poems that appear to be positive and optimistic or refer to feelings of satisfaction and well-being

Accept any valid interpretations, any valid comments on contexts of production and reception and any relevant integrated comment on poetic methods that are embedded into the argument.

Question 04***Skirrid Hill* – Owen Sheers**

Sheers prefaces *Skirrid Hill* with a quotation from T.S.Eliot.

Examine the significance of Sheers' choice of this preface for his collection.

[25 marks]

Possible content:

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

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

As this is an Open Book examination, it is expected that students pay close attention to the methods used by writers to achieve their effects and use detailed and accurate quotations to support their points. Students may focus on:

- aspects of poetic form and genre
- aspects of structure, eg use of stanzas
- aspects of language, eg rhyme, rhythm, imagery
- methods that might reflect key words from the quotation, eg 'strange', 'pattern', 'complicated'

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

In exploring ideas about strange or difficult relationships, students will be engaging with not only the specific context of modern literature from 1945 to the present day but the contexts of when texts were written and how they have been received. Students might focus on:

- aspects of ageing and perspective
- discussion of 'complication' of modern life
- discussion of 'patterns'

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts.

In exploring difficult relationships, students will be connecting with the representation of one of the central issues of modern literature. Answers to this question should be framed by a wider understanding of concepts from their connective reading in this area. For example, students may focus on issues on:

- representations of 'complications' in other reading
- representations of ageing in other reading

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

Some students will agree with the proposition set up in the task and focus on one or two of the following issues:

- close links between poems and Eliot's themes and his point about the complexities of life
- poems about strangeness
- poems about relationships of different kinds ('pattern')
- poems about life and death
- links between poems to show the coherence of the collection, such as 'YGaer' and 'The Hill Fort'

Some will disagree and focus on one or two of the following issues:

- the placing of the epigraph outside the poems themselves
- evidence that there is perhaps not always agreement between Eliot and Sheers in the collection
- evidence that the collection lacks that kind of coherence and coheres in other ways
- poems that suggest the opposite or other prevailing moods

Accept any valid interpretations, any valid comments on contexts of production and reception and any relevant integrated comment on poetic methods that are embedded into the argument.

Section A**Option 2: Drama Set Text****Question 07*****A Streetcar Named Desire* – Tennessee Williams**

‘Primarily, this play presents a clash between two cultures, not two individuals.’

Examine this view of *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

[25 marks]

Possible content:

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

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

As this is an Open Book examination, it is expected that students pay close attention to the methods used by writers to achieve their effects and use detailed and accurate quotations to support their points. Students may focus on:

- aspects of dramatic form, eg melodrama, tragedy
- non-linear structure, flashbacks
- use of black comedy, non-naturalistic effects, music, sound, lighting
- dialogue and action; contrasting language patterns of Blanche and Stanley
- dramatic methods to present clashes, eg physical and verbal violence

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

In exploring the idea of a clash of cultures, students will be engaging with not only the specific context of Modern Literature from 1945 to the present day but the contexts of when texts were written and how they have been received. Students might focus on:

- how the play’s powerful culture clash is embedded in its specific post-war context and how responses to it then and now can reflect changing attitudes over time
- the ways in which dramatic methods are an integral part of strengthening the play’s presentation of the clash of culture’s powerful messages
- the dramatic genre of tragedy

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts.

In exploring the concept of the culture clash, students will be connecting with the representation of one of the central issues of modern literature. Answers to this question should be framed by a wider understanding of concepts from their connective reading in this area. For example, students may focus on:

- a clash between cultures in a broad socio-political sense as seen in other reading
- a clash between two individuals who may be seen as representative of their respective cultures as seen in other reading
- other reading of tragic texts

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

Some students will agree with the proposition set up in the task and focus on one or two of the following issues:

- various interpretations of 'culture'
- conflict between Belle Reve/Elysian Fields as places with different values
- conflict between 'old America' and 'new America' (beyond just Blanche vs Stanley)
- conflict between the genders
- conflict between the generations
- conflict between the classes

Some will disagree and focus on one or two of the following issues:

- the 'two individuals' argument, focusing on Blanche and Stanley
- the 'two groups' argument, where the two Americas are represented by several characters or aspects of characters
- conflict mitigated by the co-existence/harmony/attraction between the various opposing characters and ideas
- more positive readings than the implication of the quotation that the play is about destructive conflict

Accept any valid interpretations, any valid comments on contexts of production and reception and any relevant integrated comment on dramatic methods that are embedded into the argument.

Question 08***A Streetcar Named Desire* – Tennessee Williams**

Examine the view that *A Streetcar Named Desire* fails because the relationship between Stella and Stanley is ‘inconceivable’.

[25 marks]

Possible content:

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

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

As this is an Open Book examination, it is expected that students pay close attention to the methods used by writers to achieve their effects and use detailed and accurate quotations to support their points. Students may focus on:

- aspects of dramatic form, eg melodrama, tragedy
- non-linear structure, flashbacks
- use of black comedy, non-naturalistic effects, music, sound, lighting
- dialogue and action; contrasting language patterns of Stella and Stanley
- dramatic methods to present their sexual attraction, eg music

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

In exploring changing attitudes to marriage, students will be engaging with not only the specific context of Modern Literature from 1945 to the present day but the contexts of when texts were written and how they have been received. Students might focus on:

- how the marriage of Stella and Stanley is embedded in its specific post-war context and how responses to it then and now can reflect changing attitudes over time
- the ways in which dramatic methods are an integral part of strengthening the play’s presentation of their stormy marriage

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts.

In exploring the roles of men and women within marriage, students will be connecting with the representation of one of the central issues of modern literature. Answers to this question should be framed by a wider understanding of concepts from their connective reading in this area. For example, students may focus on:

- gender, class and culture as seen in other reading

- power and patriarchy as seen in other reading

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

Some students will agree with the proposition set up in the task and focus on one or two of the following issues:

- Stella's previous life in Belle Reve
- differences between her and Stanley – speech, values, lifestyle, etc.
- possibility that the relationship matches Williams' thematic aims and messages but lacks plausibility
- relative lack of full explanation about how Stella ended up in Belle Reve
- Blanche's speeches about the mismatch between Stella and Stanley

Some will disagree and focus on one or two of the following issues:

- Stella's explanation that the strongest attraction between her and Stanley is sexual
- presentation of Stanley as physically attractive
- presentation of Stanley as persuasive and manipulative
- presentation of Stella as forgiving of Stanley's shortcomings and understanding his weaknesses; her 'narcotized tranquility'

Accept any valid interpretations, any valid comments on contexts of production and reception and any relevant integrated comment on dramatic methods that are embedded into the argument.

Question 09***Top Girls* – Caryl Churchill**

‘Churchill presents a cynical, negative critique of powerful women.’

Examine this view of *Top Girls*.

[25 marks]

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

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

As this is an Open Book examination, it is expected that students pay close attention to the methods used by writers to achieve their effects and use detailed and accurate quotations to support their points. Students may focus on:

- aspects of dramatic form
- non-linear structure, flashbacks
- use of black comedy, non-naturalistic effects, music, sound, lighting
- dialogue and action
- ironic/satiric methods, possibly aiming to show the achievements of powerful women as selfish or ‘hollow’
- use of characters as symbols of larger ideas or abstract concepts

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

In exploring changing attitudes to women, students will be engaging with not only the specific context of Modern Literature from 1945 to the present day but the contexts of when texts were written and how they have been received. Students might focus on:

- how the opportunities and limitations of the female characters in the play are embedded within their respective social, historical and cultural contexts as well as that of the 1980s
- how responses to the play when it was written and now can reflect changing attitudes over time
- the ways in which dramatic methods are an integral part of strengthening the play’s presentation of women

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts.

In exploring the private and public roles of women, students will be connecting with the representation of one of the central issues of modern literature. Answers to this question

should be framed by a wider understanding of concepts from their connective reading in this area. For example, students may focus on:

- gender, class and culture as seen in other reading
- power and patriarchy as seen in other reading

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

Some students will agree with the proposition set up in the task and focus on one or two of the following issues:

- the presentation of Marlene in the present and the dinner party guests in the past as flawed
- the idea that modern powerful women in particular tend to be selfish loners or 'hollow' who do not really move society or the case of women forward
- criticisms of Thatcher, Thatcherism and the capitalist model of powerful women inherent in the play

Some will disagree and focus on one or two of the following issues:

- the presentation of hope as the socialist model of real power coming from cooperation, sharing and compassion
- Isabella as a symbolic representation of this idea
- readings of the presentation of powerful women as positive role models

Accept any valid interpretations, any valid comments on contexts of production and reception and any relevant integrated comment on dramatic methods that are embedded into the argument.

Question 10***Top Girls* – Caryl Churchill**

Examine the view that the character of Dull Gret is insignificant within the play as a whole.

[25 marks]

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

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

As this is an Open Book examination, it is expected that students pay close attention to the methods used by writers to achieve their effects and use detailed and accurate quotations to support their points. Students may focus on:

- aspects of dramatic form
- non-linear structure, flashbacks
- use of black comedy, non-naturalistic effects, music, sound, lighting
- dialogue and action
- ironic/satiric methods
- use of Dull Gret and other characters as symbols of larger ideas or abstract concepts

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

In exploring changing attitudes to women, students will be engaging with not only the specific context of Modern Literature from 1945 to the present day but the contexts of when texts were written and how they have been received. Students might focus on:

- how the opportunities and limitations of Dull Gret (as for the other female characters) are embedded within their respective social, historical and cultural contexts as well as that of the 1980s
- how responses to the characterisation of Dull Gret can reflect changing attitudes over time
- the ways in which dramatic methods are an integral part of strengthening the play's presentation of women

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts.

In exploring the role of women, students will be connecting with the representation of one of the central issues of modern literature. Answers to this question should be framed by a wider understanding of concepts from their connective reading in this area. For example, students may focus on:

- gender, class and culture with relation to Dull Gret as seen in other reading
- power and patriarchy as seen in other reading

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

Some students will agree with the proposition set up in the task and focus on one or two of the following issues:

- that Dull Gret appears in Act One only
- that she is mostly busy with the meal rather than spoken interaction with other characters
- her relative silence plus monosyllabic comments
- she is historical/fictional outside the play's contemporary setting
- that one of her possible functions is to provide coarse comedy

Some will disagree and focus on one or two of the following issues:

- the significance of her narrative speech about Hell and war
- her role as a female leader in that narrative and the causes for which she fought and won
- her role in Churchill's debate about powerful women of the present
- the impact of her dramatic functions, eg comedy underlines seriousness, role of silences in building suspense, as an antidote to modern sophistication, etc.

Accept any valid interpretations, any valid comments on contexts of production and reception and any relevant integrated comment on dramatic methods that are embedded into the argument.

Section A**Option 3: Prose Set Text****Question 13*****Waterland* – Graham Swift**

Examine the view that the ‘Fenland landscape’ is the most compelling character in this novel.

[25 marks]

Possible content:

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

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

As this is an Open Book examination, it is expected that students pay close attention to the methods used by writers to achieve their effects and use detailed and accurate quotations to support their points. Students may focus on:

- aspects of narrative form and genre
- aspects of the ways in which Swift has structured the text, eg digressions, the mimicking of the river’s flow
- language effects. eg dialogue and description

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

In exploring changing attitudes to place and history, students will be engaging with not only the specific context of Modern Literature from 1945 to the present day but the contexts of when texts were written and how they have been received. Students might focus on:

- how the importance of place and history within the novel is embedded within the specific social, historical and cultural contexts of the 1980s and how responses to the theme might suggest changing responses over time
- the ways in which narrative methods are an integral part of strengthening the novel’s presentation of place and history

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts.

In exploring the role of place and history, students will be connecting with the representation of one of the central issues of modern literature. Answers to this question should be framed by

a wider understanding of concepts from their connective reading in this area. For example, students may focus on:

- landscape and memory as seen in other reading
- nostalgia as seen in other reading
- ideas about continuity and change as seen in other reading
- dystopian ideas from other reading

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

Some students will agree with the proposition set up in the task and focus on one or two of the following issues:

- the title of the novel
- chapters that exclusively or mainly describe the landscape
- the presentation of the fens as impermanent, always under threat of being 'reclaimed' by water and sea
- the fens as a place where life and death are closely connected
- the fens as a place of mystery, superstition, fear and danger

Some will disagree and focus on one or two of the following issues:

- Swift's presentation of other compelling, mysterious characters, eg Martha Clay or Dick Crick, as points of contrast
- the fens being compared to the human body
- the use of 'compelling' and/or the use of 'character' in the question
- the presentation of other possibly more compelling characters
- references to the featureless nature of the fens, an obscure forgotten place where little happens

Accept any valid interpretations, any valid comments on contexts of production and reception and any relevant integrated comment on narrative methods that are embedded into the argument.

Question 14***Waterland* – Graham Swift**

‘Graham Swift presents history as being as much about the private as the public.’

Examine this view of *Waterland*.

[25 marks]

Possible content:

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.

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

As this is an Open Book examination, it is expected that students pay close attention to the methods used by writers to achieve their effects and use detailed and accurate quotations to support their points. Students may focus on:

- aspects of narrative form and genre(s)
- aspects of the ways in which Swift has structured the text, eg digressions, the different time periods
- language effects, eg dialogue and description

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

In exploring changing attitudes to the place of the individual in history, students will be engaging with not only the specific context of Modern Literature from 1945 to the present day but the contexts of when texts were written and how they have been received. Students might focus on:

- how the importance of the individual in place and history within the novel is embedded within the specific social, historical and cultural contexts of the 1980s and how responses to the theme might suggest changing responses over time
- the ways in which narrative methods are an integral part of strengthening the novel's presentation of ideas about the individual and history

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts.

In exploring the role of the individual and history, students will be connecting with the representation of one of the central issues of modern literature. Answers to this question should be framed by a wider understanding of concepts from their connective reading in this area. For example, students may focus on:

- the private relationships of the individual as seen in other reading

- the relationship between the individual and wider society as a whole as seen in other reading

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

Some students will agree with the proposition set up in the task and focus on one or two of the following issues:

- the presentation of Tom as a history teacher and the classroom scenes
- Swift's development of Tom's voice as a narrative method to tell various historical narratives
- different layers of history: the land itself, Fenland people and society, the history of the central characters and the narrator etc.
- Tom's tendencies towards reflection, introspection and philosophy
- chapters where the narrative is suspended to meditate on the significance of history
- Swift's interplay between past and present
- various ways in which Swift presents uncertainties about the future

Some will disagree and focus on one or two of the following issues:

- concerns about nuclear war
- the history of brewing etc
- Swift's concerns for the present and future as well as the past

Accept any valid interpretations, any valid comments on contexts of production and reception and any relevant integrated comment on narrative methods that are embedded into the argument.

Question 15***The Handmaid's Tale* – Margaret Atwood**

'In Gilead, men are victims too.'

Examine this view of Atwood's presentation of male characters in *The Handmaid's Tale*.

[25 marks]

Possible content:

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

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

As this is an Open Book examination, it is expected that students pay close attention to the methods used by writers to achieve their effects and use detailed and accurate quotations to support their points. Students may focus on:

- aspects of narrative form and genre(s)
- aspects of the ways in which Atwood has structured the text, eg narrative point of view, flashbacks, the Historical Notes
- language effects. eg dialogue and description

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

In exploring representations of gender and power, students will be engaging with not only the specific context of Modern Literature from 1945 to the present day but the contexts of when texts were written and how they have been received. Students might focus on:

- how the ways in which men and women are represented within the novel are embedded within the specific social, historical and cultural contexts of the 1980s and how responses to the theme might suggest changing responses over time
- the ways in which narrative methods are an integral part of strengthening the novel's presentation of ideas about gender and power

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts.

In exploring representations of gender and power, students will be connecting with the representation of one of the central issues of modern literature. Answers to this question should be framed by a wider understanding of concepts from their connective reading in this area. For example, students may focus on:

- relationships between men and women as seen in other reading
- gender, power and patriarchy as seen in other reading
- connections with other dystopian literature

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

Some students will agree with the proposition set up in the task and focus on one or two of the following issues:

- the arguably sympathetic presentation of men outside the regime who are persecuted or vulnerable, such as Luke, Nick and other members of Mayday
- the group execution of the supposed rapist
- the view that the patriarchs such as the Commander are also presented as ‘victims’ of conditioning in Gilead

Some will disagree and focus on one or two of the following issues:

- the patriarchal ethos of Gilead, as taught by Aunt Lydia, for example
- the repressive treatment of women in general and Offred, Ofglen, Moira in particular
- the Ceremony and its indignities
- the presentation of the Doctor

Accept any valid interpretations, any valid comments on contexts of production and reception and any relevant integrated comment on narrative methods that are embedded into the argument.

Question 16***The Handmaid's Tale* – Margaret Atwood**

Examine the view that, in *The Handmaid's Tale*, Atwood's primary concern is sexual violence against women.

[25 marks]

Possible content:

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

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

As this is an Open Book examination, it is expected that students pay close attention to the methods used by writers to achieve their effects and use detailed and accurate quotations to support their points. Students may focus on:

- aspects of narrative form and genre(s)
- aspects of the ways in which Atwood has structured the text, eg narrative point of view, depiction of violence
- how concern is shown to the reader

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

In exploring representations of gender and power, students will be engaging with not only the specific context of Modern Literature from 1945 to the present day but the contexts of when texts were written and how they have been received. Students might focus on:

- how the ways in which men, women and sex are represented within the novel are embedded within the specific social, historical and cultural contexts of the 1980s and how responses to the theme might suggest changing responses over time
- contribution to dystopian literature

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts.

In exploring representations of gender, power and sex, students will be connecting with the representation of one of the central issues of modern literature. Answers to this question should be framed by a wider understanding of concepts from their connective reading in this area. For example, students may focus on:

- sexual relationships between men and women as seen in other reading
- gender, power and sexuality as seen in other reading

- other dystopian literature and its view of sexual relationships

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

Some students will agree with the proposition set up in the task and focus on one or two of the following issues:

- different ways in which sexual violence against women is addressed
- the institutionalisation of rape in the Ceremony
- the routine way in which the Doctor uses sexual exploitation
- whether the Gileadean lifestyle reinforces the objectification of women, in Jezebels for example

Some will disagree and focus on one or two of the following issues:

- Atwood's disapproval of all violence, particularly to action political repression
- the view that Atwood's primary concerns are about the objectification of women in various ways and about widespread attitudes current in contemporary society, not just sexual violence
- the view that Atwood is concerned for both genders under totalitarian rule

Accept any valid interpretations, any valid comments on contexts of production and reception and any relevant integrated comment on narrative methods that are embedded into the argument.

Section B

Option 1: Drama and Prose Contextual Linking

Option 2: Prose and Poetry Contextual Linking

Option 3: Drama and Poetry Contextual Linking

Question 5, 11, 17

***Brick Lane* – Monica Ali**

Explore the significance of isolation in this extract.

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed analysis of the ways that Ali shapes meanings.

[25 marks]

Possible content:

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

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

As this is an extract-based question, it is expected that students pay close attention to the methods used by the writer to achieve their effects and use detailed and accurate quotations to support their points. Students may focus on:

- aspects of narrative form and genre
- narrative point of view
- setting and location
- use of questions, reported speech, religious language, straightforward word choices and syntax, minor sentences

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

In exploring the nature of isolation as presented in this passage, students will be engaging with not only the specific context of Modern Literature from 1945 to the present day but the contexts of when texts were written and how they have been received. Students might focus on:

- ideas about isolation and loneliness and what can cause this
- ideas about the isolation of women in particular, by reason of class, race, gender or culture

- ideas about place / location leading to isolation in that places featured in texts may have a bearing on the author and/or the circumstances of composition

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts.

In exploring the nature of isolation as presented in this passage, students will be connecting with the representation of one of the central issues of modern literature. Answers to this question should be framed by a wider understanding of the concept of the isolation that can be present in modern society drawn from their connective reading in this area. For example, students may focus on issues on:

- ideas about isolation and alienation as seen in other reading
- ideas about the significance of place in prose fiction

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

Students will respond differently to the passage and might focus on one or two of the following issues:

- the East London setting
- Nazneen's restricted view from the flat
- the loneliness of her arranged marriage to an older man
- impositions of his expectations on her domestic life
- Nazneen's thoughts about the tattooed woman
- her preoccupations with cooking, and caring for the home
- her memories of her earlier life
- the influence of her religion

Accept any valid interpretations, any valid comments on contexts of production and reception and any relevant integrated comment on narrative methods that are embedded into the argument.

Question 6, 12, 18***Brick Lane – Monica Ali***

‘Modern literature shows isolated characters as being profoundly damaged.’

Compare the significance of isolation in two other texts you have studied. Remember to include in your answer reference to how meanings are shaped in the texts you are comparing.

[25 marks]

Possible content:

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

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

As this is an Open Book examination, it is expected that students pay close attention to the methods used by writers to achieve their effects and use detailed and accurate quotations to support their points. Students may focus on:

- methods of presenting and linking forms of isolation
- possible purposes and effects
- prose methods such as: narrative structure; point of view; chronology; use of dialogue; indirect speech; development of settings; ways of influencing the readers’ response to character and incident, etc.
- dramatic methods such as: explicit structural devices; dramatic irony; stage directions; indirect ways of communicating the writers’ messages and ideas; naturalistic and other styles of representing character, incident and narrative, etc
- poetic methods such as: types of verse form; explicit and implicit structural features; use of tropes for rhetorical effect; use of aural devices for rhetorical effect; elliptical use of language, etc.

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

In exploring the nature of isolation as presented in two of their set texts, students will be engaging with not only the specific context of Modern Literature from 1945 to the present day but the contexts of when texts were written and how they have been received. Students might focus on:

- direct and indirect isolation
- physical isolation
- psychological effects of isolation
- physical isolation due to settings

- other forms of isolation due to (for example) gender, language, culture, religion, belief, attitude or age
- comparison with others who are perhaps less isolated
- the role of isolation in the whole narrative
- the relation of presentation of isolation to other subjects and themes in the literature of modern times

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts.

In exploring the nature of isolation as presented in their two set texts, students will be connecting with the representation of one of the central issues of modern literature. Answers to this question should be framed by a wider understanding of the concept of the isolation that can exist within modern society drawn from their connective reading in this area. For example, students may focus on:

- connections of similarity and/or difference at the level of subject matter/ genre/ attitudes and/or methods

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

Students will respond differently to their set texts and might focus on one or two of the following issues:

- the debate around the nature and possible forms of isolation as expressed in their two texts
- the extent to which the contrasting genres of their set texts affect the ways in which they present isolation

Accept any valid interpretations, any valid comments on contexts of production and reception and any relevant integrated comment on narrative methods that are embedded into the argument.