Further insights into how ‘extract to whole’ can be approached in our new GCSE specification

GCSE English Literature (8702)

Aim:

To provide additional guidance (beyond that set out in the specification and Launch and Preparing to teach materials) on the way our extract to whole assessment strategy can be approached in our new GCSE English Literature specification 8702.

What is ‘extract to whole’?

The subject criteria and regulation for the new GCSE English Literature specification require it to be closed book assessment and un-tiered for all abilities of students.

‘Extract to whole’ is our way of supporting students to meet these requirements in a fair and transparent way. A typical question will provide students with an extract from their studied set text and ask them to use it as a starting point to consider how it relates to their understanding of the text as a whole. The extract can act as the basis, should the student choose, for close textual analysis which can complement any other references that they might make to the text as a whole.

Where does it apply within the assessment strategy?

It applies most obviously to Paper 1. This assesses two set texts: Shakespeare and the 19th century novel. Both questions take the same approach. They assess the same Assessment Objectives in the same way and are equally weighted for marks.

In each case, students are provided with an extract from the text and required to relate this to at least one other aspect of the text of their own choosing in order to show evidence of their understanding of the whole.

An aspect of it can also be considered to apply to Paper 2, Section B. This is where students respond to a studied cluster of poetry. In that students will be presented with a poem re-printed within the question paper and then required to compare it to at least one other poem from the cluster that is not available to them in open book form, they can think of it as similar to extract to whole. The printed poem can act as the equivalent of an extract to be the focus for their close textual analysis, and their choice of comparison poem acts as the whole, showing wider understanding of the cluster. As such, the same approaches and learning can apply.
Looking closely at the Assessment Objectives

A01
Read, understand and respond to texts. Candidates should be able to

- Maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response.
- Use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.

This AO focuses clearly on candidates’ response to a text and the need to maintain a critical style. This represents a shift away from legacy GCSE, which places more of an emphasis on themes, characters and ideas, and instead seeks to encourage candidates to provide a personal response to these aspects.

Candidates are expected to use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations. Where candidates have sections on the text provided as part of the question they can use quotations, they can also use textual references. Textual references can be used in different ways:

- quoting
- summarising the text
- paraphrasing
- referencing single words

These can all be powerful ways in which to support responses in closed book contexts. The accuracy of candidates’ references are not assessed.

A02
Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.

This AO is the assessment of the writer’s craft: how the writer has communicated meanings to the reader, and is broadly the same as it is in legacy GCSE. There is however, a move away from the technical terminology that exists in the current specification and instead this new specification focuses on rewarding candidates for the relevance and use of this terminology.
AO3
Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.

The marks awarded for context have been reduced from the current specification and now make up 15% of the overall GCSE grade. AO3 is assessed across all components, apart from the unseen poetry in paper 2.

The essential difference between the ways in which context was addressed in legacy GCSE, and in the way it will be addressed in the new specification (8702), is through scope and range.

The legacy AO4 prescribed context as 'social /cultural / historical'. These specific descriptions have been removed from the wording of the new AO3. This means that students have a wider scope under which to consider context than under previous specifications. In teaching and assessing AO3, teachers and students can consider context in a flexible way, dependent on the text itself and whichever contexts are the most relevant for that particular text. They may, for example, view the text against the backdrop of genre and ask how reading *Macbeth* against the genre of tragedy sheds light on the events of the play.

They may also relate the text to the context within which the text is set: location, social structures and features, cultural contexts, and periods in time.

However, the idea of context as a relationship between the text and the reader remains a relevant way of considering context; foregrounding the reader’s own context(s) – how they react to the text they are reading in light of their own values at the time they read the text is also a valid way of contextualising a text.

AO4
Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.

This is broadly the same as it is with legacy. SPaG constitutes 5% of the English Literature GCSE, with 4 marks awarded in Section A of Paper 1 and 4 marks in Section A of Paper 2.
What might this look like as an exam question?

* Romeo and Juliet is being used here to exemplify the assessment, although the same principles can be applied to both the Shakespeare texts and the 19th century novel.

Read the following extract from Act 3 Scene 2 of Romeo and Juliet and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play Juliet is waiting for the Nurse to come back from meeting Romeo.

**JULIET**

Come, night; come, Romeo; come, thou day in night;  
For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night  
Whiter than new snow on a raven’s back.  
Come, gentle night, come, loving, black-brow’d night,  
Give me my Romeo; and, when he shall die,  
Take him and cut him out in little stars,  
And he will make the face of heaven so fine  
That all the world will be in love with night  
And pay no worship to the garish sun.  
O, I have bought the mansion of a love,  
But not possess’d it, and, though I am sold,  
Not yet enjoy’d: so tedious is this day  
As is the night before some festival  
To an impatient child that hath new robes  
And may not wear them. O, here comes my nurse,  
And she brings news; and every tongue that speaks  
But Romeo's name speaks heavenly

Starting with this speech, explore how Shakespeare presents attitudes towards love in Romeo and Juliet.

Write about:

- what Juliet says about love in this speech  
- how Shakespeare uses language to present attitudes to love in the play as a whole.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]
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Starting with this speech, explore how Shakespeare presents attitudes towards love in Romeo and Juliet.

Write about:

• what Juliet says about love in this speech
• how Shakespeare uses language to present attitudes to love in the play as a whole.
How is this assessed?

Whilst the question is set out in two bullet points, the first referencing the extract, and the second referencing the whole, it remains an essentially holistic approach to the text. There are not separate marks allocated to each bullet point within the mark scheme.

Instead, it is the overall quality of the response that is rewarded.

This allows students to take different and flexible approaches to the question.

How can it be approached?

The extract to whole strategy is designed to reward a range of approaches. Some are set out here, though others can equally apply:

- A student might choose to spend half of their allocated time responding to the extract, and half of their time referencing the text as a whole
- Another student might spend longer on the extract, and less on the whole
- Whilst another student still, might choose to spend longer on the whole and less on the extract.

Either way, it is important to note that in all three cases, the quality of the response as a whole will be marked. Only where students fail to make reference at all to the extract, or show any understanding beyond it to the whole, will their response be capped in (band 2).

Making use of the extract:

One way to think of the extract is to see it as a rich opportunity to explore aspects of character, theme, language, imagery or writer’s craft particular to the section of the text from which it is taken. Students will always be provided with a contextual clue to help them.

These thinking prompts or frames can help students to get inside the extract:

- I think at this point in the text, the writer is trying to establish for the reader ….
- One aspect of the character that the writer focuses on, or develops here is …. 
- What strikes me as important in the way that I respond to the character (or relate to the theme of) here is … because of the way that the writer …. 
- It is interesting to note that this is (early, in the middle, or late in the text) so that by this stage, the writer focuses the reader’s attention on … 
- The writer seems to want the reader to feel … (towards the character, or about the theme etc) and this is developed in the way that he/she …
This approach principally sees the student thinking about the extract as a pivotal moment in the text. It is significant because of where it comes within the sequence of the text, and in that sense, because of how the reader responds to the character(s) or themes or language and images differently to how they might respond at a another point in the text.

**Referencing the whole:**

In selecting another moment, or moments from the text to show evidence that they have understood the whole, a student might think about other pivotal points in the text that are worthy to note because the section selected:

- reinforces a reader’s perception of the character or theme etc, or confirms the way that the writer is shaping the reader’s response
- develops a reader’s perception
- changes a reader’s perception
- conflicts or confounds a reader’s perception
- introduces the potential for different interpretations.

It is the student’s ability to select, and then cite reasons for their selection of this other area of the text that will contribute to them being rewarded for their insight, and degree of sophisticated response.

**Can students approach it differently to this?**

In that the response will be marked holistically, students will be rewarded however they choose to approach the question.

A student might select one idea, line or image from the extract and develop their response to that as well as an aspect of the whole text that they are minded to reference – repeating this approach to create an integrated response to both extract and whole.

**Helpful thinking prompts or sentence stems might include:**

- One point that I notice in this extract is the way in which the writer…
- Later, (or earlier) in the text, we see a change (or development, or confirmation) to this in that …
- Another point of significance in the extract is …
- Again, this relates to a point (later or earlier) in that …
Or, a student might, depending on where the extract comes in the sequence of the play, begin with a response to the whole and then write, in the second part of their answer, a response to the extract.

**Helpful thinking prompts or sentence stems might include:**

- In that this extract comes from the (end) of the text, it is interesting to think about how the writer first introduces us to …

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**Enhancing learning through our e-Library digital texts**

Or new e-Library is accessible to teachers as well as individual students through personalised log-ins to the digital platform. It is a free entitlement, and hosts full digital text versions of our Shakespeare and 19th century set texts, as well as the poetry clusters.

Once logged-in, a student can:

- make use of the e-reading facility to read and study texts in the classroom, at home, or when travelling so long as there is an internet connection
- bookmark key passages that they want to save and return to
- enlarge text to work on key extracts
- search other sections of the text to relate extract to whole
- add written (or spoken notes using a computer or tablet microphone)
- highlight text to work on in more detail
- watch video assets of the texts, sometimes containing performances, readings or guidance and advice.
How one teacher has made use of the e-Library to support learning in the classroom and develop independent study at home

Lesson 1

The class are studying a Shakespeare play and have completed an initial first reading in class using a print copy of the text. The teacher is now keen to develop confidence in students to work within the extract to whole assessment strategy.

Using the digital version of the text on the e-Library, the teacher selects a key scene to act as the equivalent of an extract. She displays this on the class white board and uses the font sizing tool to enlarge the section of text so that students can focus attention on the set number of lines.

In groups, students discuss the teacher’s selection of extract using some of the thinking frames presented earlier:

Why have I selected this extract?

Where does it come in the sequence of the play?

It is interesting to note that this is (early, in the middle, or late in the text) so that by this stage, the writer focuses the reader’s attention on …

The writer seems to want the reader to feel … (towards the character, or about the theme etc) and this is developed in the way that he/she …

In hearing their feedback, the teacher takes the opportunity to model the use of the highlighting and note making tool to model how students can annotate the extract to show their understanding of AO1 and AO2 and AO3.

Lesson 2

The class either use individual tablets or work at an IT station in the school and access the e-Library through their own personalised log-ins. They return to the book-marked scene that the teacher modelled in the previous lesson, and consider more of the thinking prompts to use the note making tool to add their own annotations to the text:

One aspect of the character that the writer focuses on, or develops here is ….

What strikes me as important in the way that I respond to the character (or relate to the theme of) here is … because of the way that the writer ….
The teacher draws the class back together and models an additional use of the digital platform to support their learning. She shows them where video assets are located for the text and plays one of them for the class.

She explains that the video assets will continue to be added to over time, but generally seek to cover:

- performances or animated readings of the text
- discussions or interviews with actors being hot-seated in the role of a character
- discussions with actors or directors to consider decisions being taken to deliver key lines in certain ways and how this can change meaning or an audience’s response
- explanations by senior examiners that focus on aspects of the assessment strategy.

She asks them to return to their work stations to review some of the video assets, and in doing so, see if they can improve the depth and quality of their notes on the extract.

Does the asset provide more insight?

What difference is it making to the notes that you are keeping?

**Homework activity**

The teacher uses the functionality within the e-Library to create a distinct user group for herself and her students. This allows her to add some notes of her own to the extract. These act as two tasks that students are required to respond to as a key part of their independent learning:

Focus on this line of text and this use of language/imagery that is being developed – what can you say about it?

How is the writer reinforcing your response to the character (or theme of) through such use of language/imagery?

Students access the tasks when they log-in at home.

For students unable to access the e-Library at home, the teacher provides a print version of the tasks and text for them to complete.
Lesson 3

The teacher returns to modelling use of the digital text to look at how the search tool can act as a useful guide when students need to reference the whole.

She types a key word into the search tool and shows students how it lists all the relevant sections of the play that reference the word.

She explains how one of these or several of them could be the focus for students to make a broader reference to the play as a whole. She takes the opportunity to select one and models use of the note making tool to annotate it as a pivotal moment in the play. She provides students with a hand-out that covers some prompts for them to consider, based on the examples provided earlier.

Does it:
• reinforce your perception of the character or theme etc, or confirm the way that the writer is shaping your response?
• develop your perception to deepen your understanding?
• change your response in some way?
• conflict or confound with what you first think, or feel at a different point?
• introduce the potential for different interpretations?

Students use the search tool to follow their own evidence trail and make use of the prompts to select one to work on in more detail.

Lesson 4

Students make presentations to the class to explain their selected references to the whole and share where they have made notes justifying their selection.

The teacher takes the opportunity in plenary to celebrate the learning that is taking place and reinforce the key flexibility of the extract to whole assessment strategy – that there is no single way to approach it, and no set answer as to which section of text students have to draw on to show evidence of the whole. They are demonstrating that many different routes can be taken to show evidence of whole and that they will build on this through future study, not just of this play but when also studying their 19th century text and poetry cluster.