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# GCSE English Literature Mark scheme support

Launching a new resource pack

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## We're here to help

We've assembled a collection of support resources so you can get better value from our mark schemes.

Visit [aqa.org.uk/eaqa](https://www.aqa.org.uk/eaqa) and log in to Secure Key Materials. From there, navigate to English Literature and on to *Mark scheme support*.

This quick guide for the English Hub School networks introduces the key elements of this support, meaning you can jump straight in before pouring over the detail later.

### Enclosed:

- Mastering the mark scheme: what to expect
- From the Chief Examiner: attributes of 'Level 4'
- Example student response: no comments

# Mastering the mark scheme

The new mark scheme support can be found on [aqa.org.uk/eaqa](https://www.aqa.org.uk/eaqa), our secure logged-in area for centres. It's free and easy to access from a desktop or laptop. Navigate to Secure Key Materials, on to English Literature and finally *Mark scheme support*.

You can:

- Watch Sarah Darragh, the Chief Examiner, explain how she determined a mark for six distinct student responses and levels.
- Better understand the different strands of progression at each response level.
- See key conceptual differences at the threshold of Level 3 and Level 4 responses.
- Access AQA-approved examples of mark scheme application through annotated, colour-coded responses from students of different abilities.

## English Hub School network session

For an introduction to key aspects of the resource, follow the steps below.

### First

- Watch the Chief Examiner's video of attributes that a Level 4 student demonstrates.
  - A section of this explanation has been reproduced on page 4, overleaf.
  - You may wish to refer to the mark scheme too.

### Second

- Read the student response reproduced at the back of this document, this is judged to be Level 4.
- Based on the explanation in the film clip, work as a group to identify any key aspects of the response that support a mark at this level.
- In particular, note any aspects that seem to demonstrate the conceptual grasp of 'text as conscious construct'.
- Discuss your thoughts.

### Third

- Watch the Chief Examiner's video commentary of the Level 4 response which explains how the judgement has been made. Again, a section of this explanation has been printed for you to look at in the session.
- Discuss the opportunities for teaching and learning.

## From the Chief Examiner

### The Chief Examiner explains attributes of a Level 4 response:

“One of the defining features of a Level 4 response is a candidate starting to focus on **the text as conscious construct**, therefore it follows that there is **clear focus** on what the writer is doing (**the candidate will explain the effects of writer’s choices linked to purpose**) and it also follows that context will be relatively clearly understood and explained.

Typically, for a student to convincingly demonstrate consistent Level 4 qualities, their response will be firmly focused on the text as a deliberate construction; in other words, it is in this level where students really get to grips with the purpose of the subject – the fact that any literary text has been deliberately created.

A further defining feature of Level 4 is a response that demonstrates clear understanding of what the text is ‘about’ **at a more abstract level**: themes/ideas rather than just plot/character/feelings.”

### From the mark scheme for Level 4

“Clear understanding”

16–20 marks

A01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clear, explained response to task and whole text.</li><li>• Effective use of references to support explanation.</li></ul>	At the top of the level, a candidate’s response is likely to be clear, sustained and consistent.  At the bottom of the level, a candidate will have Level 3 and be starting to demonstrate elements of understanding and/or explanation of writer’s methods and/or contexts.
A02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clear explanation of writer’s methods with appropriate use of relevant subject terminology.</li><li>• Understanding of effects of writer’s methods on reader.</li></ul>	
A03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clear understanding of ideas/perspectives/contextual factors shown by specific links between context/text/task.</li></ul>	

## Example student response

How is Lady Macbeth shown to be powerful in this scene and in the play as a whole?

Lady Macbeth is shown to be powerful because of her determination and manipulation. She is ruthless and feels almost not ~~get~~ ~~got~~ guilt in many of her experiences through out the play. The quote "stop up th'access and passage to ~~remove~~ <sup>remorse</sup>". Shows that she wants to feel nothing during the time when Duncan is killed. She wants to make sure her emotions don't give her away, so she summons evil spirits to 'take them away' or 'stop them'. This word " ~~remorse~~ <sup>remorse</sup> " suggests that her feeling of ~~get~~ guilt and regret can be easily stopped by "blocking" the passage. This would have made the audience feel stunned because she is summoning evil, which was ~~believed~~ <sup>believed</sup> to be real at that point in time and was feared, so she could convince her husband to kill.

Another reason Lady Macbeth is shown to be powerful is when she asks the spirits to make her a man. The quote "unsex me here!" ~~shows~~ shows that Lady Macbeth wants to be a man so she can have the power to do what needs to be done. The way she says this quote is very demanding and shows how Lady Macbeth is ~~expected~~ <sup>expected</sup> to receive what she wants, when she wants it. Similar to when she wants Macbeth to kill Duncan a day after she hears Macbeth's news, she wants power as soon as possible. The word "unsex" implies that she needs the power a man has because women were not seen as very powerful in Shakespeare's time and Lady Macbeth needed a man's power to convince



Macbeth that she wanted him to kill Duncan. This would have made the audience feel shocked because although women probably wanted more respect and power, they would never do something so ~~easy~~ extreme to get it.

Through out the rest of the play Lady Macbeth's attitude is very different compared to the extract. An example of this is when she calls Macbeth a "coward". Lady Macbeth has turned so mad for power she has started to degrade her husband. The audience know Macbeth is no coward when comes to killing because at the beginning of the play we see him in battle, killing the king's enemy. It is only after Macbeth sends Lady Macbeth a letter about the witches prophecies she starts to want power to the point where it gets her angry/aggressive, she tells Macbeth that he doesn't love her because he will not kill the king. Macbeth wants to prove to his wife that he is no coward and will do anything for her, but he doesn't want to kill the king to prove his point.

Lady Macbeth also has a huge attitude change towards the end of the play. She starts to see blood on her hands. <sup>the old man had so much blood in him,</sup> Similar to Macbeth seeing the ghosts, and starts to worry. ~~and other things~~. Lady Macbeth starts to sleep walk and speak out loud about what her husband did and how it was her fault, which leads to her death. Guilt starts to take over, her and Macbeth drift apart and she starts ~~to~~ realising that Macbeth's killing spree is all her fault. Lady

Macbeth starts to notice how Macbeth has changed and starts to feel alone. She is a great example of how guilt can literally <sup>completely</sup> destroy a person's life to the point of suicide. This might have made the audience feel sympathetic towards Lady Macbeth but they would still remember all the horrible things she has done throughout the play. It would show the audience how weak Lady Macbeth really was and how power lead to her rise and fall.

In conclusion.

✓ Lady Macbeth is shown as a very powerful woman, filled with determination to get what she wants but when she finally gets what she wanted everything starts to go down hill, her and Macbeth drift apart and sadness takes over. She goes from strong to weak powerful to fragile. ✓ Lady Macbeth shows an audience that they should be careful for what they wish for.

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