



A-LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

7707/1 Telling Stories
Report on the Examination

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General comments

Students were well-prepared for the examination and examiners noted that students coped well with the timings and that most finished all three sections of the paper. Students approached the paper in different ways, some choosing to answer sections B and C before section A. Although the suggested timings for the exam might suggest a linear approach, and the marks for each section descend, students are not penalised for approaching the exam in whichever way they choose. It should be noted, however, that some students who chose to answer section B and C first did appear to struggle to reach the higher levels when they got to section A at the end of a long exam paper. It is worth ensuring that students who wish to approach the exam in a non-linear order are well-prepared for this so that they are able to sustain their responses across all three sections.

The vast majority of students:

- answered all three sections with developed responses to their chosen questions;
- understood the need to answer section A with a comparative approach;
- included mostly relevant ideas, showing knowledge of their set texts and poetry;
- met the rubric expectations for all three questions.

Section A: Remembered Places

There are three marks awarded for this question on the following assessment objectives:
AO1 (15 marks) – Apply concepts and methods from integrated linguistic and literary study as appropriate, using associated terminology and coherent written expression.

AO3 (15 marks) – Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which texts are produced and received.

AO4 (10 marks) – Explore connections across texts, informed by linguistic and literary concepts and methods.

This section is focused on the ways in which speakers and writers present places, societies, people and events with the key concepts of:

- representation
- point of view
- genre, mode and the influence of contextual factors.

In general, most students found the texts accessible and were able to comment in interesting ways about the written text (*Foreign Correspondent: Paris in the Sixties*) and the spoken text (*Visiting Paris*), usually finding some connections between them. Many students were able to discuss the representation of first experiences in Paris in thoughtful and perceptive ways, and could use these to focus their analysis and comparisons. A number of students were able to explore how language is used to create these representations and could make effective comparisons of how the writer and speakers in both texts convey their viewpoints, with a clear understanding of how genre and mode affect their choices, and how contextual factors influence their representations.

As a general overview, the most successful responses:

- allowed enough time to respond to this higher tariff question;
- selected a range of relevant language levels to make precise points about representation of first experiences in Paris, making this the focus of their response, rather than a more general focus on Paris;

- discussed relevant concepts such as schemata and embodied knowledge to offer a more widely-considered evaluation of the extract;
- considered Grice's maxims and politeness theories accurately and precisely when discussing the spoken mode text;
- were able to evaluate patterns in language use and representation such as the extended metaphor of Paris as a stage in text A or the patterns of language use when presenting the American tourists in text A;
- used terminology precisely to aid their analysis and evaluation;
- were able to develop analysis and evaluation with a clear focus on representation;
- used a clear academic register to discuss their ideas;
- understood the precise contexts of the two extracts (such as Lennon's Irish heritage and his reasons for moving to Paris, along with the Paris syndrome and culture shock he experienced, and Mike and Sophia's British heritage and different reasons for visiting Paris; also, the precise purposes and audiences for the texts) and discussed relevant factors with an understanding of their influence on language use and representation;
- understood and evaluated the different time periods in which the two texts were produced and how this may have impacted on attitudes to tourism both from a tourist's perspective and from the Parisians' perspective;
- were able to discuss features of genre and mode in specific relation to how these were used in the given texts (such as conventions of a memoir for text A and conventions of interactive spoken discourse in text B, and could evaluate how representations in text A were more evocative due to the genre and mode compared to the more honest and straightforward representation in text B due to the spontaneous spoken mode);
- made thoughtful connections focused on representation and language use as well as genre, mode and context, interleaving this throughout their analysis;
- offered some thoughtful ideas about how the writers represented their first experiences of Paris, focusing on representation of place, people and self.

As a general overview, less successful responses:

- selected language levels which did not help them to analyse ideas about representation and led to vague comments about the effect of a textual example;
- identified features without linking these to representation or discussing how they shaped meaning in the texts (feature spotting);
- selected very long textual examples and did not make clear which element of the quotation to which the label used referred;
- used more general or less precise terminology (such as 'word', 'imagery', did not discuss textual examples with a linguistic focus, or identified a feature without exemplification from the text;
- struggled to organise their ideas or develop them with clarity;
- did not go beyond identifying the genre and mode of the two extracts or identified these inaccurately, or offered some formulaic initial paragraphs focusing on genre, mode, audience and purpose without then relating this to language choices or representation in relation to the question focus;
- did not understand the genre (text A) or context of reception (text B) leading to inaccurate observations about audience in particular;
- were not precise about audience or purpose, making generalised comments;
- struggled to make valid connections between the texts or made generalised connections based on mode or genre;
- were unable to focus on representations and focused only on AO3 points;

- made very basic points about representation, based on whether it was positive or negative and failed to understand the more subtle representations, particularly representation of Lennon’s experience of the place, the American tourists and his deepening understanding of Parisians throughout the extract, or the different representation of Parisian waiters by Mike and Sophia in text B.

AO1: This AO assesses 3 distinct strands:

1. Selection and analysis at appropriate language levels
2. Use of concepts, methods and terminology
3. Expression and presentation of ideas

This question was generally answered with at least some knowledge and understanding, and students seemed to cope well with the two extracts, with most being able to make at least some valid points about each. There were very few level 1 marks awarded as most students were at least able to make some valid selection and use at least some general terminology. Examiners noted that, on the whole, students engaged with language levels and that some students demonstrated some skill in appreciating and exploring patterns – in language use, in attitudes, in representations. Particularly pleasing was seeing some students focus on concepts and methods, not just on specific language feature analysis, as this often enabled them to link features used across the text to discuss patterns. This is a key focus of this question and successful students were able to apply ideas about schema and embodied knowledge, as well as the concept of the ‘double journey’ and travel narrative theories, which benefitted their responses. In AO1 (across all sections of the paper), it is useful to think about the distinction between a concept (an idea), a method (a tool for analysis) and a feature (a specific example) when assessing AO1. So, a student could be exploring characterisation (concept), using speech and thought presentation (method) and identifying different kinds of speech verbs (feature). Students can therefore address AO1 in different ways mindful of the fact that good answers will offer precise descriptions using established terminology.

Examiners noted:

- Some students applied concepts such as Labov’s narrative framework, politeness principles, Grice’s maxims and theories of gender differences in language use to text B. Where this was specifically linked to language use and/or representation, this was successful; where it was a general comment with no textual example, it did not work as well.
- Some students applied Grice’s maxims to the written text (text A). It is worth ensuring that students know when and where these concepts/theories can be effectively applied.
- When discussing text B, students labelled spoken language features such as pauses, fillers, backchannelling and hedging but some did not discuss the effect on meaning and representation, instead just identifying them as features linked to genre and mode.
- Many students talked about modality but, as with previous years, this was not always applied correctly. There was some confusion about epistemic, deontic and boulomaic modality but it was pleasing to see many more students applying this to their responses. The following link includes some discussion of modality in Lesson 2, and may be helpful in helping students understand the different types of modality:
<https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/english/AQA-7706-7707-TI-IW-POV-CTT.PDF>
- Some students selected just one language level - usually lexis and semantics – and were therefore fairly limited in their analysis of the texts.
- Many students inaccurately labelled the list of adjectives in text A (‘...the trivial, vicious, depraved, dramatic or beautiful things...’) as an asyndetic list.

- Many students inaccurately labelled the abstract nouns ‘dryness’ and ‘lusciousness’ in text A as adjectives.
- There is still confusion around deixis, with any word or phrase loosely connected to time, space or person being labelled as deixis. Students would benefit from understanding how deictic language is context-bound and this would help them identify and discuss it with increased accuracy. The following link is included to help teachers and students understand deixis: <https://thedefinitearticle.aqa.org.uk/tag/deixis/>
- There is still some imprecision in students’ use of semantic field - a term sometimes used very loosely for any kind of collection of words, rather than being grouped by meaning relations. Again, some students identified a ‘semantic field of nouns’ or a ‘semantic field of pronouns’. Students also used the term ‘semantic field’ when referring to just one example rather than a number of examples which contributed to the semantic field.
- General terms like ‘high- or low- frequency lexis were again not helpful and led to some students using valuable time making points about this which added little to their understanding of how language was being used to represent ideas, people or place. Students also used vague terms such as ‘imagery’, ‘repetition’ and ‘modal shading’ without then being specific about the features which created these.

AO3: This AO assesses 3 distinct strands:

For Section A

1. Factors associated with mode
2. Generic conventions including different ways of storytelling afforded by different genres
3. The influence of contextual factors (production and reception) on the negotiation and shaping of meaning

Examiners felt that, in general, successful students were able to discuss all three strands this year and were able to integrate analysis of these factors into their discussion of language levels/features successfully, in addition to/or instead of offering an overview in the introduction. The most successful students were able to analyse/evaluate how language and representation was influenced by the writer’s contexts of production and reception, choice of genre and mode, leading to better integration of the AOs for this question and often affecting AO1 and 4 positively. Many students included a plan (not assessed) which showed they had a methodical way of considering mode, genre and context. There is no set way that students should approach the discussion of AO3 factors, but students who were able to link it to the discussion of AO1 or representation did seem to be able to make more precise comments on the specific influence.

Examiners noted:

- Whilst many students were able to identify genre, mode, audience and purpose (often briefly in the introductory paragraph), a number were unable to go beyond this. Some students made very generalised comments on audience, particularly for text B, commenting that the text was for younger people looking to visit Paris, and misunderstanding the closed audience of the participants themselves and the wider audience of students studying the text. Students would benefit from clarity in terms of audience of the texts in the anthology, particularly where texts are sections from a wider text.
- Whilst many students were able to discuss the mode of text B with some confidence, they were not able to develop ideas about mode when discussing text A beyond commenting that it was written mode. Responses which were able to discuss text A as planned written mode with consideration of concepts such as literariness were able to address this strand of AO3 more effectively.

- Some students were confused about the genre of text A, thinking it was a newspaper article rather than a memoir, which impacted on their discussion of purpose and audience.
- Some students were confused about when text A was written, thinking it was published in the 1960s rather than this being the period of focus for the memoir which impacted on their comments on context or production and reception.
- Some students made AO3 the main focus of their response to the detriment of other AOs, with very brief comments on language use linked only to an AO3 factor, and very little consideration of representation.
- Some students identified the genres of the texts in the introduction and said nothing further about this strand of AO3. Students would benefit from understanding how genre conventions influence speakers/writers and manifest themselves in texts.
- This year, fewer students talked about audience in terms of aspirers, explorers, mainstreamers and reformers but it was still seen; this psychometric audience profiling borrowed from media did not help students to address specific audiences for the two extracts. Students would better benefit from discussing intended audience/text receiver more specifically.

AO4: This AO assesses students' abilities to explore connections between texts and highlight similarities and differences – in the context of discussing the representation focus of the question. It is only assessed in Question 1.

Students seemed able to take a comparative approach and cover extracts evenly. Very few students made no connections or were marked as Level 1 for this AO.

Examiners noted:

- Some students seemed more confident in making connections based on AO3 factors rather than linking the extracts in terms of representation which limits the level they can achieve for this AO. Whilst it is not a rubric limitation, for level 4 and above, students need to analyse/evaluate how writers/speakers represent place, societies and people, and this is difficult to do where the main focus of the comparison is on AO3 factors.
- There are still some students discussing text A, using a connecting discourse marker, and then discussing text B, leading to fewer precise connections but, generally, more students seemed able to make connections throughout their response, using clear comparative discourse markers to signal their connections effectively. Students should be reminded that one of the descriptors for AO4 is the even coverage of the texts.
- Fewer students offered the most basic observations of the writers being negative or positive about first experiences of Paris. Most were able to go beyond this in their discussion of representation. It is worth preparing students to look across the whole extract to identify and evaluate different representations or changing ideas and attitudes, as evident in text A.
- Some students were able to discuss representations of Parisians, Americans and Lennon himself fairly effectively in text B, offering more perceptive ideas about mockery and exaggeration to entertain and the biased nature of a travel memoir, but were often unable to go beyond the Parisian waiters being rude and there being a lot of tourists in text A. Where students were able to evaluate the more subtle representation of Parisians and how they react to tourism in both texts, this was highly successful.

Section B: Imagined Worlds

There are three marks awarded for this question on the following assessment objectives:
 AO1 (10 marks) – Apply concepts and methods from integrated linguistic and literary study as appropriate, using associated terminology and coherent written expression.
 AO2 (10 marks) – Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in texts.

AO3 (15 marks) – Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which texts are produced and received.

This section focuses on how language choices help to shape the representations of different worlds and perspectives in prose fiction with the key concepts of:

- Narrator
- Storyworld
- Characterisation
- Point of view
- Genre
- Speech and thought representation

Many students were able to discuss their set text with at least some knowledge and very few did not make selections beyond the extract, allowing access to above level 2 for AO2. Examiners noted that students were generally effective in applying an integrated approach to their text and few responses were seen that lacked any linguistic analysis. The most common text was *The Handmaid's Tale* and most answered question was Q6 – women's physical appearances, followed by Q7 (*The Handmaid's Tale* – the past), Q9 (*The Lovely Bones* - journeys), Q3 (*Frankenstein* – the relationship between Victor and the creature), Q4 (*Dracula* – Transylvania as a location), Q8 (*The Lovely Bones* – Ruana), Q5 (*Dracula* – Mina's relationship with Jonathan Harker) and Q2 (*Frankenstein* – guilt). Students were mostly able to discuss their extract with knowledge and understanding and make relevant selections from elsewhere which were linked to the focus of the question. Examiners noted that AO3 was addressed by the majority of students this year by exploring the use of genre conventions and the influence of context to address and enhance the consideration of key concepts in relation to the question focus.

As a general overview, the most successful responses:

- focused closely on the question focus, evaluating significance;
- discussed the construction of narrative point of view and how this shapes our understanding of how events/ideas/characters are represented;
- supported ideas by exploring the language of relevant textual examples from both the extract and other points in the novel;
- selected relevant language levels to best explore authorial craft and were able to evaluate patterns;
- applied a range of terminology accurately and precisely;
- explored in detail how meanings are shaped by writer's craft and use of narrative techniques such as narrative structure, narrative perspective and reliability, narrative voice, analepsis/flashbacks, prolepsis/flash forwards, stream of consciousness, foreshadowing, characterisation, hamartia, pathos, indirect speech, direct speech, dramatic irony, irony, symbolism, contrast and conflict, specific sensory images such visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile or gustatory, extended metaphors, hyperbole etc.
- made considered and relevant use of different concepts and methods (eg types of narration, modality, representation of speech and thought);
- provided interpretations that were well supported by detailed evidence from the text and clearly linked to their selected example;
- evaluated the conventions of fantasy, gothic, speculative or dystopian fiction linking these clearly to the specific question focus;
- included relevant and thoughtful comments on the influence of contextual factors, and were able to consider interpretations of their text, again, linked to the specific question focus; some of the best responses integrated this discussion to explore the significance of writer's choices of language, characterisation etc.;

- were sustained and developed;
- were well expressed and clearly structured.

As a general overview, less successful responses:

- struggled to address the specific question focus;
- made little or no comment on narrative point of view or other narrative techniques;
- made general and vague references to different points in the novel, sometimes without any specific selection;
- did not use precise terminology or made errors in the application of terminology, or used no linguistic description at all;
- used general labels (eg 'word', 'tone', 'imagery') rather than more precise linguistic terms;
- made broad assertions, not supported by clear examples, or offered interpretations that could not be drawn from the selected quotation and were just assumptions;
- did not link their discussion of textual examples to the language level/feature they had identified;
- did not understand their extract fully, leading to generalisations rather than precise discussion;
- did not contextualise quotations taken from different points in the novel or signal where in the novel the selections came from;
- did not consider generic conventions and/or contextual factors, or made general comments about these without linking them to the question focus;
- were poorly expressed and lacked development.

AO1: This AO assesses 3 distinct strands:

1. Selection and analysis at appropriate language levels
2. Use of concepts, methods and terminology
3. Expression and presentation of ideas

Examiners felt that, although students generally found something to say about language, this was still the section where this was addressed less thoroughly and systematically than in sections A and C. Some students who were able to reach high level 4 or level 5 for AO1 in sections A and C dropped to level 3 or even lower for AO1 in this section.

Examiners noted:

- Successful students were often able to select a number of language levels to explore their extract and used these to develop understanding of the character/theme/concept but some students were overly reliant on the language level of lexis and semantics which limited their analysis.
- There were still a number of students who included no linguistic description or focus on language levels in this section to aid their analysis when they had included it in sections A and C. The Imagined Worlds text needs to be approached with an integrated approach grounded in stylistics as with all other texts in this course; examiners noted that they saw several 'literature' based responses in this section, which are self-limiting.
- Some students were able to develop their analysis with some shaping of the discussion of language levels to focus on the significance aspect of the question. This is included in the question stem for every section B questions so students should be prepared for responding to this to be able to access the higher levels for both AO1 and AO2.

- Many students were able to talk about features such as semantic fields, use of pronouns, metaphor, verb processes, syntactical parallelism which helped them to explore patterns and access level 4 or 5.
- More students were discussing modality in a purposeful way but there was some confusion and inaccuracy, as in section A (see link given under AO1 in Section A).
- Students misunderstood temporal deixis and spatial deixis, labelling any adverbs of time as temporal deixis and any location as spatial deixis. Students would benefit from clarity of understanding of these terms (see link given under AO1 for Section A).
- There was some confusion over syndetic and asyndetic listing; some students were able to apply these accurately and effectively but many could not. It is also important that students are able to evaluate their effect rather than simply identify they have been used.
- Some students selected one language level/feature and then discussed an entirely different feature in their explanation/analysis, eg they might select a declarative and then discuss the meaning of an adjective in that declarative without any reference back to the use of the declarative. Students need to ensure that their analysis/evaluation of language features actually links to the language feature selected. It would be fine to discuss both the declarative and the adjective but we saw several students who mismatched their selected feature and their explanation/analysis. Generally, where students select and identify declaratives, there is rarely any meaningful analysis of the impact of this feature.

AO2: This AO assesses 3 distinct strands:

1. Maintaining a focus and selecting appropriate detail
2. An ability to interpret
3. Analysis of narrative techniques and authorial craft

The majority of students were able to select at least one other relevant part of their novel to comment on. There was not always selection and analysis of language levels for these selected passages/sections, and comments were often more generalised. Many students demonstrated at least some sound understanding of their chosen text and there was at least some understanding of aspects of writer's craft.

Examiners noted:

- Some students struggled to select the most relevant other parts of their novel to answer the question; students should be encouraged to know their set text thoroughly to make this selection easier and more precise in examination conditions, and to understand their given extract within the context of their novel. That said, many were able to use other parts of the text to illuminate their evaluation of their extract and to develop their line of argument.
- Students still sometimes struggled with the significance aspect of the question. Some students used the word 'significance' in as many points as possible but, in some cases, were not actually explaining/evaluating the significance. It might be helpful to encourage students, after discussing the what, where and how, to consider why a writer has chosen to portray a character/theme/concept/location in this specific way which may help them to address the significance aspect of the question.
- Almost all students were able to respond to the specific question focus and there were fewer responses where students who discussed irrelevant ideas or textual examples. In responses to Q2, some students struggled to focus on guilt as a concept, instead discussing Frankenstein and his feelings more generally; in Q4, some students focused on locations in the novel more generally rather than Transylvania specifically; in Q6, some students focused on the outfits and colours of the different dresses in Gilead rather than on

women’s physical appearance more widely or discussed men’s appearance/uniforms without relating this to the question focus.

- Examiners saw some generalisations about characters and relationships, particularly in Q3 where students just focused on describing the anger and resentment seen between Victor and the creature in the extract rather than exploring the changing relationship throughout the novel and the significance of this; in Q8, some students focused on Ruana as a possible love interest for Jack Salmon rather than her presentation and interaction with other characters and her significance; in Q5, some students just focused on the stereotypical husband and wife relationship between Mina and Jonathan rather than the different roles she embodies and the inversion of gender roles in places.

AO3: This AO assesses 3 distinct strands:

1. Features of the extract and the wider novel associated with the fantasy genre
2. Genre conventions
3. The influence of contextual factors (production and reception) on the negotiation and shaping of meaning.

Examiners were pleased to see that many students integrated at least some discussion of genre conventions this year. Fewer students just labelled their novel as dystopian or Gothic and, instead, considered or evaluated the writer’s use of specific conventions in relation to the question focus. Students are credited whether they discuss these explicitly or implicitly, and some students were able to achieve a higher level on this AO than on AO1 and 2. Many students were also able to consider relevant contextual influences and the reception of their novel. These were addressed particularly well in responses to *The Handmaid’s Tale* and *Dracula*. It should be noted that two of the three descriptors for AO3 in section B are focused on genre and genre conventions so it is vital that students are prepared to focus on these in their responses.

Examiners noted:

- Students generally understood the conventions of dystopian, Gothic, Romantic and magic realism genres and the stronger responses integrated these into their discussion of specific textual examples rather than listing them in the introduction and not revisiting them.
- Although examiners saw relatively few *Frankenstein* responses, some students missed the opportunity to discuss genre conventions, particularly in Q3 (the relationship between Victor and the creature), focusing almost entirely on Shelley’s own experiences of parenting as a contextual influence. More discussion of genre conventions such as the sublime and the gothic would have been helpful.
- Again, fewer responses to *Dracula* were seen but there were some useful discussions of Mina as The New Woman, religious beliefs and gender roles in response to Q5, and the Victorians’ fear of the East, the fin-de-siècle notions of ‘othering’ and interest in the supernatural and superstitions in response to Q4. Genre conventions such as the supernatural, sublime and Gothic elements were seen in the more successful responses.
- In response to *The Handmaid’s Tale*, many students were able to score well on AO3 just by discussing the nature of Gilead’s regime as this covered relevant genre conventions such as control and oppression of behaviour, speech and thought, indoctrination and removal of identity. Successful links to other dystopian works such as Orwell’s *1984* or *Animal Farm*, Huxley’s *Brave New World*, Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451* or Collins’s *The Hunger Games* enabled students to discuss relevant genre conventions. Links to Nazi Germany, Iran, the political context in 1980s America and feminist movements were successful when discussing context of production and reception, and links to current political issues in

America such as the reversal of the Roe vs. Wade ruling and, the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan enabled students to make further relevant points about context of reception.

- Many students who answered a question on *The Lovely Bones* seemed better able to discuss contextual aspects such as: expectations of women during the 1970s; 1970s American suburbia; ‘othering’ of Ruana as an immigrant in Q8; Sebald’s personal experiences and how these might have influenced her choices; the context of reception of post 9/11 America; Kubler Ross’s stages of grief; critics’ reactions to the novel and genre conventions associated with fantasy/magic realism, urban gothic and the use of supernatural elements, often quoting critical reviews of the text. It would benefit **all** students studying this text to consider these kinds of genre features and contextual factors.
- Some students still struggled to discuss genre conventions; there is no need to label every point on genre conventions with a signposting comment (‘this is a common convention of...’), and some of the best responses weaved the discussion of conventions more implicitly into their analysis; however, for students who might struggle to do this, signposting the conventions may help them to ensure they are included.
- Some students focused their response almost entirely on a discussion of context and genre; while this often resulted in higher marks for AO3, this was sometimes at the expense of AO1 and 2; while it is pleasing to see more focus on this AO, students would benefit from practising the coverage of all three AOs to ensure they are able to access the higher levels across them all.
- Some students were able to discuss relevant contextual aspects but did not make any references to genre; it is worth noting that the first two bullet points of this AO are focused on genre features/conventions and, by limiting their discussion to context, they are limiting their mark for this AO in this section. Examiners also saw responses which only focused on genre conventions and no comment on context of production or reception. Students would benefit from being encouraged to consider and address all three strands of this AO.

Section C: Poetic Voices

There are two marks awarded for this question on the following assessment objectives:

AO1 (15 marks) – Apply concepts and methods from integrated linguistic and literary study as appropriate, using associated terminology and coherent written expression.

AO2 (10 marks) – Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in texts.

The majority responses for this section were on Duffy, followed by Heaney, then Browning, then Donne. The most popular Duffy question was 14 (feelings about views on love); the most popular Heaney question was 16 (speaker’s feeling about journeys); the most popular Browning question was 13 (attitudes towards possession); the most popular Donne question was 10 (speaker’s views on the long-lasting nature of love). Most students were able to make relevant selections from another poem and showed at least some knowledge and understanding of their poems. Many students seemed able to consider the construction of poetic voice in a sustained and productive way.

As a general overview, the most successful responses:

- sustained focus the specific question;
- selected a range of language levels and offered detailed evaluation of specific features and patterns;
- applied a range of accurate and precise terminology;
- selected one other poem which was relevant to the question focus rather than as a comparative text;

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- did not compare their poems, analysing each in thorough detail in relation to the question focus; this approach allowed students to select the most relevant language levels and really explore the writer's methods, better recognising and evaluating patterns across each poem;
 - maintained focus on the construction of poetic voice throughout discussion of both poems;
 - offered sustained analysis/evaluation of aspects of writer's craft;
 - when selecting features such as rhyme or metre, were precise about this and able to develop clear interpretations on how this contributed to how meanings are shaped;
 - discussed phonological features with perceptive ideas about the effects created;
 - made thoughtful and judicious selections of details to discuss in each poem;
 - offered thoughtful and developed interpretations of textual details;
 - sustained a clear and sophisticated academic style.

As a general overview, less successful responses:

- did not sustain focus on the specific question, often going off on tangents which were not relevant to the question focus;
- tended to describe each of their poems, narrating what happens throughout rather than analysing;
- were unable to select many language levels, focusing mainly on lexis and semantics, and discussed very few linguistic features;
- made some selections from their poems but did not have a linguistic focus in their discussion of these;
- compared their poems, hindering the development of analysis;
- did not select a poem in addition to the named poem, or selected a poem which did not allow them to write clearly about the question focus;
- did not focus on poetic voice or the construction of this, instead describing what the writer/poet says and thinks;
- did not discuss writer's craft, instead making broad comments on what quotations showed;
- made assertions about rhyme or metre with no explanation of how they contribute to meaning;
- labelled phonological features, eg, alliteration, without discussion of their effect;
- included lots of contextual information about the poet's life or time they were writing in; this could not be credited as AO3 is not assessed in section C and took students' time and focus away from the analysis of the poems.
- lacked coherence in expression, leading to muddled and imprecise development of ideas.

AO1: This AO assesses 3 distinct strands:

1. Selection and analysis at appropriate language levels
2. Use of concepts, methods and terminology
3. Expression and presentation of ideas

Generally, students were able to make selections of language levels and discuss features in this section more successfully than in other sections, often achieving a higher mark/level for this AO than in sections A and B. Students often used more precise terminology to help them focus on specific linguistic details.

Examiners noted:

- On the whole, students' knowledge and understanding of language features was stronger in this section; students would benefit in applying this knowledge to sections A and B.

- Students were more confident in using linguistic terminology in this section but sometimes did so at the expense of discussing how meaning is created from the use of these features.
- A number of students commented on the assonance/consonance within a particular example when it was not clear that there was any obvious assonance present or the claims for its effects were over-stated.
- Many students discussed phonoaesthetics and, where this was handled successfully, used this to make insightful points about meaning or the poetic voice.
- Plosives, fricatives and sibilance were often correctly identified but not used to aid analysis. Sometimes students were spotting these kinds of phonological features at the expense of closer analysis of meaning.
- Some students used general terms such as ‘imagery’ and ‘repetition’ without being specific about the linguistic feature used.
- Many students discussed the structure of their poems, commenting on rhyme and metre, volta, caesura and enjambment; however, students need to know how to quote these and practise developing their ideas about how these features contribute to meaning as examiners still saw some students simply labelling the rhyme scheme or metre, or saying that there was caesura or enjambment, and making little comment on how these contribute to the meanings created, or offering a general comment such as ‘it makes the speaker’s ideas flow’.

AO2: This AO assesses 3 distinct strands:

1. Maintaining a focus and selecting appropriate detail
2. An ability to interpret
3. Analysis of construction of poetic voice and authorial craft

Most students selected another poem relevant to their question and were able to show understanding of how their chosen poet created meanings, at least in a straightforward way, and often with more thoughtful and developed interpretations. There were some impressive responses to all four poets and all eight questions, particularly where the second poem enabled students to offer open-minded and perceptive ideas about the question focus.

Examiners noted:

- Some students are still answering this question with a comparative approach. AO4 is not assessed on this section, and it often leads to weaker development of ideas and interpretations. It also hinders students’ selection of the most relevant points to discuss, as they are trying to make their selection fit into a comparison. It was noted that some students who take this approach are relying on a pre-prepared comparison of two poems, rather than selecting their second poem with a focus on the specific question.
- Some students are still offering biographical details, or giving an extended commentary of the social and historical context of the time the poems were written. This is not always helpful and AO3 is not assessed on this section. Sometimes, a comment on one of these aspects aids the analysis of a specific feature and can be developed as part of the evaluation, however, most of the time, this detracts from the close and focused analysis that students need to develop at the end of a long examination.
- Many students were able to discuss poetic voice in some detail, with stronger responses analysing how this is constructed through writer’s craft. However, some students were still unsure about poetic voice (particularly when responding to the Donne or Heaney questions, often just referring to what Donne or Heaney say and think) and would benefit from more

- focus on this in their consideration of poems in preparation for the examination, particularly the different layers of the poetic voice, to allow students to explore this more effectively.
- When responding to Donne Q10, some students did not focus on the specific question – the long-lasting nature of love – instead commenting more generally on love.
 - When responding to Browning, the focus on the construction of poetic voice seemed to be particularly successful when students chose poems with a clear persona and, even where the poems used Browning’s voice, they were still able to discuss how his attitudes and feelings were created. Students studying any of the poets would benefit from a clear focus on analysing the ‘voice’ in all of the poems and exactly how this is created by the poet’s use of linguistic and literary features.
 - When responding to Duffy, students were generally able to select relevant other poems and discuss these in relation to the question focus.
 - When responding to Heaney, there was some successful evaluation of both physical and metaphorical journeys seen in stronger responses to Q16.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.