

Examiners' Report
June 2016

GCE English Literature 8ET0 01

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Introduction

Candidates and their teachers are to be congratulated on their hard work in preparation for this first examination of the new AS Specification. The vast majority of candidates appeared to have been well prepared, with achievement right across the range including stimulating and rewarding work of the highest quality. Candidates had engaged thoughtfully with the texts and appeared to have enjoyed the demanding course. Centres had, on the whole, been successful in guiding candidates to address the assessment objectives for each section and examiners saw few incomplete or less able scripts.

This paper presented candidates with a number of challenges. Taken together, the two sections required them to address all of the assessment objectives. In Section A, the challenge required candidates to respond to a named poem from a study of a wide ranging contemporary anthology and to select a second poem for comparison with reference to a given theme. For Section B, the challenge was to construct a coherent response to proposition, holding in balance the need to address four assessment objectives. Candidates responded well in the main, and appeared to have judged their time sensibly in the light of the higher mark allocation to Section B.

Examiners based their judgements on marking grids which should have become familiar to centres from the two sets of sample papers released by Edexcel. These proved easy to use, helpful and concise. Teachers could share these with candidates, exploring the significance of key level discriminators in the light of both the sample answers already released and the extracts from candidate responses in this report.

Section A

Most candidates had clearly prepared the poems thoroughly. Many had clearly taken advantage of the supporting resources provided – though candidates should be reminded that this is intended to support their preparation rather than provide suggested answers. The more able work indicated that candidates had taken time in the examination to consider the named poem carefully in the light of the topic in the question and then chosen their accompanying poem with care. Less able answers appeared to be based on the selection of a second poem the candidates were most comfortable with, without regard to the specific focus, for example choosing a poem for Question 1 that did not really contain a ‘memorable character’, or a poem for Question 2 that hardly dealt with a ‘disturbing event or situation’.

The more able responses combined commentary on what the poem was about, in relation to the question, with commentary on the poets’ use of language and poetic techniques. Some candidates seemed intent on demonstrating their knowledge of features such as alliteration and enjambement without really indicating what such features were being used to convey, or demonstrating the features from the text and the effects created. Other candidates, obviously trained in the comparison of texts, produced detailed comparison of language features without an overarching argument. A number of candidates produced a very mechanistic linguistic analysis, often focusing minutely on the use of punctuation, or drawing wide conclusions from a few words which were proclaimed to be a lexical field. The latter often drew conclusions from their analysis which do not seem to have been based on a proper reading or understanding of the whole text, for instance proclaiming *Fantasia on a Theme of James Wright* to be ‘a romanticised history of the life of miners’.

Section B

Here too most candidates appeared well prepared on the texts. The marking grids make clear that answers are assessed separately on candidates’ understanding of the play and the writer’s craft (AOs 1 and 2) and on their awareness of the significance of context and different interpretations (AOs 3 and 5). Candidates with a good grasp of the plot and characters in their plays were often challenged by the requirement to combine informed exploration with contextual references and alternative readings and interpretations. Responses ranged from virtually no reference to AO3 and AO5 through the insertion of isolated comments to the integration of well-chosen references into the flow of well-balanced arguments. The most able answers fully incorporated references to context and

alternative interpretations with AO2 detail – and made it clear that they were dealing with drama and not just a narrative or character study.

Whilst knowledge and understanding of the historical, social or biographical background to a play can on its own inform the interpretation, an 'evaluative approach' (Level 5) really requires detailed engagement either with the methods a writer has used to comment on, reflect or challenge their society or with the ways in which the writing has been shaped by their experiences.

The drama questions all began with a quotation intended to help candidates address different interpretations, emphasised by the wording 'in the light of this comment, explore...'. Many candidates failed to take full advantage of this by responding to the ideas set out in the question in full, such as the reference to 'the excitement and clamour' in Question 9. Some candidates clearly felt that they needed to introduce either named critic or critical schools with references to viewing the play through a feminist or Marxist 'lens', for example. This was successful if the critic or critical school was carefully chosen and related directly to relevant details in the text – otherwise the comments tended to be general (Level 2) and could distract from the coherence of the argument. It proved possible for candidates to construct successful arguments by responding to the quotation alone, considering alternative interpretations, audience responses and other aspects. Effective debates do not have to go into great detail about opposing views; candidates can agree or disagree with the comment in the question so long as they support their discussion from the play.

The specification separates the plays into tragedies and comedies and some candidates took this as an indication that they should refer to aspects such as Aristotelian ideas about tragedy. In fact, only one question (Question 3) made explicit reference to tragedy; Question 11's use of 'delightful' could be taken as an invitation to consider comedy. While it can help if candidates consider aspects such as the causes of conflict, the reasons for a character's downfall or the creation of comic effects, attempts to impose such frameworks in the abstract rarely succeeded in practice; they would be more successful addressing themselves to the specific topic in the question.

The comments and tips on individual questions include many that apply more widely to study of drama for this paper. It is hoped that teachers will find these useful, whichever plays they are teaching.

Question 1

This was the less popular choice in Section A, either because candidates felt deterred by the length of *Out of the Bag* or perhaps because they felt less confident about the choice of another poem about 'memorable characters'. Candidates should remember that a long poem is not necessarily more difficult than a short one and, perhaps more importantly, blanket coverage of any poem is not in itself a virtue; indeed, judicious selection of material for comment is worthy of credit. The question asked for consideration of memorable characters, and the more able responses selected and structured local detail from the poem. All candidates showed basic understanding; many explained in some detail the poetic methods used to present the doctor; the most able addressed the more demanding conceptual features of the poem, such as the parallels drawn between doctor and poet. *Effects* and *Material* were the most popular companion poems, offering plentiful opportunities for comparison through the themes of family, seniority and memory.

Many candidates limited their explorations to the first part of Heaney's poem. There was general understanding of the poem and candidates discussed how parents might avoid telling the truth of the facts of life/where babies really come from, then made use of the idea of the child's imagination filling in gaps of misunderstanding and creating something quite horrific. Good references were made to key lines by way of evidence to support assertions particularly of the description of the bag and of the body parts in the Doctor's 'laboratory'. More able answers gave a clear overview of the whole poem without needing to go through every stanza.

Chosen question number:

Question 1

Question 2

(0)

Seamus Heaney's poem 'Out of the bag' and
Fanthorpe's poem 'A minor ^(A) Role' both present
memorable characters in an emotive
way. The exploration of themes, language,
imagery and narrative voice highlight
the theme of role models within the stanzas.

Both poems O and A highlight memorable
characters through the voice of the
narrator. In O, the narrator (Seamus) is
very much conversational as he tells
a story and lets it unfold of ~~the~~ what it
was like experiencing the birth of his
brother - this draws upon a personal

element and atmosphere of the poem. Similarly, Fanthorpe's poem A is shown to have a tone of uncertainty and emotional trauma as the narrator (a cancer sufferer) ~~the~~ tells us how it feels to be unable to do day to day errands. Alike O, ^{the voice} explains ~~the~~ her experiences and tells it in the form of a novel which grasps the readers ~~and~~ and helps them relate on a personal ~~level~~ level.



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Examiner Comments

The response begins clearly, and indicates an attempt to keep both poems in view. The choice of *A Minor Role* might have been successful, though already it appears that the poem has not been fully understood, and the relationship of the 'voice of the narrator' to the patient in Fanthorpe's poem is confused. Comments so far are general, with some sense of the content of the poems but no text in support. Reference to 'the form of a novel' indicates some uncertainty about genre. There was a better grasp of some aspects of each poem later in the essay, but not sufficient to raise this above the middle of Level 2.



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Examiner Tip

- Candidates should support their points by frequent reference to and quotation from, the poems.
- Avoid the use of abbreviations for titles; more able answers often make specific reference to the significance of the titles, as these will have been chosen by the poets with care.

For comparison, this is the opening page of a secure Level 4 response. 'The Lammass Hireling' is a good choice to accompany 'Out of the Bag', allowing the candidate to make comparisons on matters of technique and at a thematic level.

The poets of 'Out of the Bag' and 'The Lammass Hireling' both present characters which are memorable and obviously had a large impact on the narrator's life. They shroud these characters in mystery, creating ambiguous descriptions and opinions of them and making their personalities difficult to comprehend. The Doctor with his bag is almost shown as an ethereal, God-like presence as the children watch him in awe as he is "like a hypnotist unwinding us", they do not fully understand what he is doing due to their innocence, but know he has an important job. Similarly, the Hireling is a mysterious character, however the narrator, being the complete opposite of childhood innocence, is quick to find out who he really is. He does regard him with some sense of awe and wonder in the first stanza, as he describes how "the cattle doled on him", adding a caesura to represent his pondering on how the Hireling could be so skilled. Dubey, who comes from a rural background ~~of~~, and was often exposed to folklore such as this, initially confuses the reader with phrases such as "a cow with leather horns", and it is only through deeper research



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Examiner Comments

The response opens with a confident overview of both poems, establishing the argument and the basis for comparison from the start. Expression is sophisticated and there is a clear sense of the candidate setting out to explore the poems afresh in the light of the examination question. Points are supported by neatly integrated quotation.



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Examiner Tip

References to techniques such as enjambement or, as here, caesura, need to be supported by precise illustration of where the device occurs and comment on the effect. This is best achieved by quotation of one or more lines, properly set out as verse.

Question 2

As for Question 1, the key word was kept clearly in view by the vast majority of candidates. Both understanding and personal engagement were evident in outlining the content of the poem, though candidates sometimes failed to pin down just what was 'disturbing' in the poems. While all reacted with disgust to the morality of Kerala, very few recognised the restrained and subtle irony in the reference to America's perception of its own values. There was also a danger that candidates got onto the hobby horse of 'the treatment/objectification of women'. While this obviously has some relevance, it sometimes led candidates away from a close examination of the text.

Often the poems were clearly understood and the responses secure in Level 3 but there was insufficient detail and exploration of AO2 to push them to the next level. One impressive candidate, in contrast, noted how the women lie down 'for' rather than 'with' their men. Such tiny points can reveal a wealth of understanding and circumspection, and should be encouraged by teachers.

The switches between locations and the varying stanza lengths provided useful material for comments on structure. As in Question 1, however, this aspect was handled least well. Many candidates had clearly been advised to write about form and structure but rarely was there any meaningful comment on how this created meaning and candidates sometimes attributed meaning to form that was spurious. More able responses used frequent and integrated poetic terminology throughout, showing a very good grasp of the construction of the poems.

This is taken from a candidate's development of the argument. The poem for comparison is Ford's *Giuseppe*, a common choice which many students used to good effect.

Disturbing events comparison - Dostoevsky + Giuseppe

Plan:

1. Introduction
2. ^{Language + Imagery} Tone of voice - stark, lack of figurative lang.
3. Structure }
Guilt - theme.
4. Imagery - sound
5. Conclusion.

In 'The Delinener' and 'Giuseppe' Tishani Doshi and Roderick Ford present disturbing events and situations through the common themes of guilt, and the boat. This is highlighted through

their common lack of figurative language, as it shows a level of acceptance and acknowledgement that does not need to be romanticised by use of descriptive language or rich simile and metaphor. 'The Diunerer' explores the adoption of a child, due to the poor quality of life and clear inequality existed in its home land. Where as ~~the~~ 'Giuseppi' explores the killing of a woman who is named as a "mermaid" to excuse the murder of a person, to diminish the starvation of war.

The language used in the first poem 'The Diunerer' is simplistic, often ^{being} mono or di syllabic.

For example, the triplet "crippled or dark or girls", shows Dashi's stark ~~acceptance~~ acknowledgement of the situation, as use of "crippled" and "dark" in postcellular present societal taboos of language use by using their simplicity to exaggerate the disturbing nature of the image of abandonment.

In ~~the~~ 'Giuseppi', however, the starkness of reality is explored through the voice's use of pronouns. For example, in the second stanza, "She, it" immediately creates a sense of ambiguity and initiates the woman's dehumanisation because "it" removes gender and

~~emphasises~~ signifies ~~an implanted~~ external a loss of meath and humanity, ~~because "it" is normally used to describe an inanimate object or animal.~~

The voice of the poem is the nephew or niece of Uncle Giuseppe, which influences the presentation of this disturbing event because there is an innocent tone that allows for the stark details like the fact she was "butchered on dry and dusty ground"

or that "she screamed like a woman" to be given with a sense of detachment from the situation. This is supported by use of colloquial terms such as: "or so they'd said", because the ideal of a "mermaid" in an "aquarium" appears like a narrative or fairy tale.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate makes effective use of neatly embedded quotation, moving fluently between the poems to develop the comparison. This was part of a secure Level 4 response; as often, there was potential to move to Level 5 with fuller development of the exploration within an overview of the theme and of each poem.



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Examiner Tip

Encourage candidates to take opportunities to relate specific details to the poem as a whole; here, the mention of the 'woman's dehumanisation' could have been developed by reference to other aspects such as her 'wedding ring' and the actions of the priest.

Question 3

Most responses to Marlowe indicated a good level of understanding and often produced strong arguments, supported by relevant context. Less able responses tended, as throughout Section B, to be limited to simplistic assertions about the beliefs of the time on topics such as religious belief. Examiners saw some strong use of recent productions to support examination of different interpretations.

Not all candidates were able to use the quotation to frame their essay, but more able answers included the notion of tragedy within their response to help structure their essays.

The morality play 'Dr Faustus' was written by Christopher Marlowe in the late 1500's and is an allegory where the protagonist chooses God over evil. However Marlowe's play goes against the traditional 'man is persuaded - man is damned - man is saved' discourse of choosing, "Heaven, and heavenly things" over evil and displays the protagonist choosing, "Lucifer and us hell" over God. Morality plays were very common during the 15th and 16th centuries as they served to educate the audience about their religion, but through entertainment, where a moral would be learnt at crucial moments. The typical Renaissance man is stereotyped as someone who wishes to have all knowledge, such as Copernicus and Ptolemy, both Renaissance scholars, or Roger Bacon who during the Renaissance period was an accused necromancer however is now named a saint. Faustus can be placed among those 'typical Renaissance men' who all dedicate their lives for knowledge however one can argue, Faustus goes beyond this ideal because the protagonist is willing, at the beginning of the play to sell his soul for "four and twenty years" of being omnipotent and omniscient, which suggests that the need for knowledge is the wealthiest and greatest desire for a Renaissance man, in the same way that money is the greatest desire for a modern man.

Allen, 2008 suggested that "Even in his very first soliloquy Marlowe's Dr Faustus is already pre-occupied with known inferior status in the world. He is already pushing the limits between social and religious attitudes" which can be argued to an extent, during scene one, when one meets Faustus for the first time, one can witness the protagonist disregarding academic studies seen through the soliloquy imperative, "Settle thy studies, Faustus" which introduces the morality play to be orientated around knowledge and the search for knowledge, however one can also witness Faustus' wish to do more ~~more~~ than just maintain the knowledge, but to become infamous seen through the interrogative, "Wouldst thou make man to live eternally, Or, being dead, raise them to life again" which is one's first indication to the extent Faustus wished to use his knowledge. However this does not push social boundaries as, for a Renaissance man, knowledge is essential no matter the cost, ~~never~~ however this does push the boundaries of religious attitudes, the protagonist can be seen to contemplate Necromancy, which was illegal during the Renaissance period and for a Christian society, only God should have the power to give life (thus suggesting Faustus' messianic complex; Faustus' doubt in his religion could be due to the play being written during the Reformation, ^{Marlowe's} ~~the~~ ^{Marlowe's} ~~the~~ interpretation of the corruption within the Catholic church in scene 8 through the alliterative diction, "My lord, here is a dainty dish": In a ^{recent} modern interpretation of the morality play, Faustus stabbed the Pope through the heart whereas in the original text Faustus only, "[hit him on the ear, and they all run away]" This recent

adaptation displays how, during the Renaissance period, hitting the pope would be seen as farcical and comedic, however would have limited effect on a modern audience. This use of ^{the} comedic scenes displays that although Falstaff has power and the ability to know all, he chooses not to make use of the knowledge to provide help for others.



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Examiner Comments

These are the opening pages of an assured Level 5 answer. Although the expression is a little convoluted at first, the candidate reveals a discriminating grasp of both context and interpretations, supported by well integrated quotation and details from the text. Context is explored from both a social and literary perspective and good use is made of the play seen in performance to consider the responses of a modern audience.



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Examiner Tip

The candidate uses a critical quotation as an integral part of the argument, elaboration on the point made by exploring specific details in the text. (It is helpful if critics are named, though dates are not essential.)

Question 4

Mostly candidates answered well, although the question did lead some to adopt a narrative approach, or throw as much context as they could remember at the answer. More able candidates could analyse and explore the relationship between Faustus and Mephistopheles, and how the audience might react.

Meph's character may have been produced as a way to mock the Catholic Church, therefore producing him to seem a stock character. As Marlowe was seen to be an ~~atheist~~ ^{negative side of Catholic} atheist, Meph represents the ~~Satanic~~ beliefs of society which many feared. As believed by Catholics that sinning would drive someone to hell, Mephistophilis puts the words into perspective, "Why this is hell, nor am I out of it... I, who saw the face of God... am not tormented with ten thousand hells in being deprived everlasting bliss?" A statement like so would create an atmosphere of fear in the audience who may fear the idea of sin during a time when there was massive conflict between the Protestant and Catholic Churches. Marlowe created Meph to act as a servant to hell but also to please ~~the~~ Queen Elizabeth as it was her father Henry VIII who invented the Protestant faith in order to marry Anne Boleyn. However Marlowe may also

name written in ~~Allegorical~~ mephistophilus to amuse the parents of society who were more likely to ~~see~~ watch the theatre but also more likely to be amused by the violent and comedic nature of the character as they were used to violence in the 16th century having to pass under beheaded traitors and witness public executions. In this time it would have also been common for witch-trials to be conducted which put a bad word against women and the practice of dark arts, therefore further condemning Doctor Faustus to be a play against religion. ~~Allegorical~~ ~~is further~~

Mephistophilus is further shown to deal with the foolish treatment of dark arts in ~~another~~ scene 9, which is a comedic scene which ~~adds~~ the vice-crow of Robin and Rafe reappear. These characters show comedic language throughout their scenes, "Ecce Signum" to which mephistophilus retaliates as to turn the two into an ape and a dog, "How can I vexed with these villains charms!". This scene agrees with the statement as mephistophilus becomes a prop to add comedic humour to the scene. For this reason meph's character was criticised for "lacking the depths of interest which a fallen angel should demonstrate" as claimed by Lucille Palmer who called Mephistophilus a "weak interpretation of a pained demon" in ^{the} 1900s.



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Examiner Comments

This extract is taken from an answer which often dwells on historical context at the expense of addressing the question. The contextual information could have been made much more relevant if it were linked to details from the play. Later in the extract the response is more focused, with a specific reference to the question and some potentially useful critical comment with some support from the text. This helped justify Level 3 marks for each pair of assessment objectives.



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Examiner Tip

Encourage candidates to relate each contextual or critical reference to specific details from the play.

Avoid abbreviations for characters' names – candidates need to adopt a register appropriate to academic discussion rather than notes.

Question 5

This question was mostly answered well by the relatively small number who attempted it, with more able candidates could evaluate whether it was a love story, and how this may be interpreted by Webster's contemporaries and by a more modern audience. Less able candidates often failed to consider alternative viewpoints in their answers.

Question 6

More able candidates could engage with the idea of a 'brutal examination' and consider if it was concerned more with 'domestic' or 'political' power. Less able candidates relied too much on describing on where the power lay but had little to say about how Webster presented it. They also struggled to engage with the debate and so failed to address A05 adequately. Context was often limited to the corruption of James I's court.

an innocent in the play; 'Delays: - throttle her'. This callousness indicated by the boredom of Bosola in the face of death indicated by the word 'delays' almost as though Canola is killed because she is wasting time, shows the cheapness of human life, and indicate Bosola's lack of power in the absence of a monarchy ~~can~~ leaves him with no other options and so as he is the Machiavellian character, he goes acts under the doctrine that 'it is better to feared not loved'.

A feminist reading of the play would be that the Duchess has no power, and that her hamartia is ~~her~~ ~~her~~ ~~her~~ political naivety which causes her to rebel in a patriarchal society, which inevitably leads to her ~~death~~ tragic death. I personally find this argument fairly convincing as she dies with any decorum she ~~may~~ ^{can}, claiming 'I am the Duchess of Malfia still' indicating her ~~unwavering~~ pride even in the face of death. ~~This is further displayed when she however comments,~~ ~~when~~ it can also be argued that the Duchess did have power and therefore must be blamed for her own fate as she knew what the consequences

of her actions would be. This is displayed when she states "whether I am doomed to live or die, I can do both like a prince". The word "doomed" indicates that she feels her predicament is already settled and all she can do is act like a 'prince'. However for an audience in 1612 after the recent death of the selfless Queen Elizabeth, the Duchess poses a problem. As she puts ~~on~~ her own interests before her duty the audience make a direct comparison which cannot be avoided. Overall, in my opinion the Duchess, ~~lives~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~crue~~ ~~lty~~ ~~of~~ ~~a~~ ~~pa~~ ~~tr~~ ~~ar~~ ~~ch~~ ~~al~~ ~~so~~ ~~ci~~ ~~ety~~ lacks power, and therefore her mistake is to act out of love which means that ~~un~~ ~~de~~ ~~n~~ ~~ta~~ ~~b~~ ~~ly~~ the power of evil in her brother Ferdinand means triumph.

To conclude, The Duchess' ^{tragic death} in 'The Duchess of Malfi' is a ~~powerless~~ ^{reluctant} ~~victim~~ consequence of being victimised by her brother Ferdinand who ~~is~~ ~~an~~ ~~psy~~ ~~ch~~ ~~ol~~ ~~o~~ ~~g~~ ~~i~~ ~~c~~ ~~al~~ ~~l~~ ~~y~~ ~~u~~ ~~s~~ ~~e~~ ~~s~~ his power to seek revenge. Webster uses the theme of light and dark in his play, which was first performed at the Blackfriars theatre which heightens the effect, to represent power and evil in characters. Webster's play is ~~an~~ ~~example~~ ~~of~~ ~~paraphrasing~~ Burke who claims 'All it takes for evil to thrive is that good men do nothing'. However the overwhelming optimism of the play shown in the last two lines, indicates that 'integrity... beyond death, shall

crown the end'. Thus suggesting that the Duchess will be vindicated, therefore she ^{can} will overcome the ~~an~~ evil powers of Ferdinand and the Cardinal conspired with Bosola and with 'nobly' 'integrity... Shall crown the end'.



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This extract, approximately the final third of the answer, demonstrates consistent use of both context and critical views supported from the text. Several characters are considered, and the reference to 'a feminist reading' is made directly relevant by the discussion of the Duchess's death. The candidate is not afraid to write 'in my opinion' as part of the argument, though a critic is also cited elsewhere. This essay was securely in Level 4 for both parts of the marking grid.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Candidates should not be afraid to voice their own opinions.

As with discussion of critics or critical theories, any comments should be supported from the text.

Question 7

The relatively small number of candidates attempting questions on this play appeared to have a good grasp of the background. Answers were well-informed if not always fully developed; sometimes the descriptions of the context crowded out discussion of the text and of the question.

The *Homeplace* by Brian Friel is set around the late 1800s in Ireland, and directly links to the real life struggle and conflict that occurred during those times between young Irelanders and the central Heimat of the British Empire. Within the play, it can be seen that Friel bases the main concepts largely on what it was like to be alive at that time during the conflict, and is able to portray that with his use of characters within the fictional village created known as Ballybeg.

It can be said that at the centre of Friel's play, there is conflict between tradition and progress, and this is shown through the use of the character 'Richard Gore'. Richard is an unfavourable character within the drama, he is a scientist who believes in very primal and dated practices, which in society can be seen as racist and stereotypical. His traditional values as a Dr cause conflict with the other characters within the play.



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This first page of the response illustrates the kind of generalised, narrative-based response that would only be awarded a Level 2 mark if the lack of textual detail were sustained.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Encourage candidates to be as specific as possible; Friel states quite clearly that the play takes place in 'Summer 1878'.

Each paragraph should have specific textual reference in support.

By way of contrast, the opening paragraphs of this answer anchor the discussion firmly in the text.

- 'centre of Friel's drama'
- conflict - tradition & progress - Plan
- characters such as Con (Fenicians) fight for return to tradition, progress or simply freedom.
- Christopher - marked from beginning - puts off trees, white mark across chest (end of tradition - "only home" or Progress for Irish)
- symbols of freedom - "falcon", progress for Irish
- both written & set when Ireland was on the cusp of change
- Richard presents archetype of pompous English upper class, experiment shut down, lack of volunteers - shows end to racist, classist ways. Refers to "barbarous" nature of Irish - forgetting own barbaric history (England's invasion of other countries).

The conflict between tradition and progress may seem ^{to be} at the forefront of Friel's play considering the play was both set ⁱⁿ 1878 and ^{performed and} written ⁱⁿ 2005 when Ireland was on the cusp of change. It is debatable whether characters such as Con Doherty, who are part of the Fenian group hoping to return Irish land to the Irish people, are fighting in order to restore tradition or for progress. Perhaps the theme at the centre of Friel's play is not in fact

the conflict between progress and tradition but rather the fight for the freedom of the Irish. Freedom is symbolised through the appearance of the "falcon" in the play, which Friel uses to signify the ongoing quest for freedom. Con's resistance to Richard's ^{degrading} research of the ^{people} of Ballybeg would also

suggest they simply seek freedom from their English oppressors.

Friel presents Richard as the archetypal upper class English man, who is ignorant towards Irish tradition. This is shown when he deliberately confuses Thomas Moore, who is a national poet for Ireland and a source of pride for many Irish people such as Clement O'Donnell, with Byron. This ~~is~~ is especially disrespectful to Clement's character, who is portrayed as extremely proud of his choir and their renditions of Thomas Moore's work. He affectionately refers to Thomas Moore as "the voice of our nation" only to be mocked by Richard when he leaves. Richard's character is portrayed by Friel to be extremely dislikeable causing the audience, especially Irish audiences, to ~~prefer~~ prefer characters such as Clement, who stand to preserve Irish traditions over characters such as Richard, who only wish to preserve the tradition of the English ruling over the Irish.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The opening paragraphs of this answer show a candidate who is not afraid to challenge the premise of the question, while at the same time ensuring that there is detailed discussion of the key words. In contrast to the first example, the historical context is precisely established by the date in the first sentence. The contextual references are shown to arise naturally for examination of details in the play, such as the falcon and 'Con's resistance to Richard's degrading research'.

Sustaining this balance of discussion, context and textual detail ensured Level 5 marks for both sections of the grid.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Candidates should be encouraged to plan carefully and keep the question in view throughout their answers.

Question 8

During 1878, at the beginning of the play, Friel uses the stage directions ~~to~~ of "motionless, enraptured ... mesmerized" to the music of "Go to in the Still Night" by "Thomas Moore", the patriotic musician of Ireland, during these times. Through this Friel is showing Margaret's true, unconscious desire and patriotism towards the Irish. The use of "motionless" and "enraptured", suggest she is not focusing on anything else, and can't stray from her Irish roots, even though she is working for the English. // In regards to 'a minor role', Friel, even though Margaret is not used in terms of 'action', ^{she} is a key character in portraying the psychological conflict the Irish face, throughout the English colonisation. Friel presents Margaret as being conflicted, due to her ~~star~~ ^{clear} patriotism to the Irish, but also her exclusion from her heritage; ^{this can be} shown through Friel's stage set out of "ring of trees around the lodge", and her working for Christopher, an English landlord.



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Examiner Comments

This extract from a high Level 4 response illustrates good use being made of stage directions to address the question through the ways Friel creates the character of Margaret. Contextual information is integrated into the developing discussion.



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Examiner Tip

Reference to aspects such as stage directions is an effective way to demonstrate understanding of the dramatist at work.

Using the writer's name in phrases like 'Friel presents Margaret...' shows awareness that the character is a literary construct.

Question 9

A Streetcar Named Desire

was by far the most popular Section B choice as it offers dramatic excitement, emotional engagement and plentiful opportunities for candidates to demonstrate their critical skills. Even those with the most limited literary acumen often found something interesting to say.

This was the more popular question on the play. Vulnerability was a quality that the candidates were keen to talk about, in particular, of course, in the character of Blanche but most also mentioned Stella and Stanley; Mitch and Alan Grey were less commonly considered. There were many thoughtful considerations of Stella's sexuality and socio-economic position, Mitch's feminine side and Stanley's ancestry and lack of education. Fewer candidates made much of 'excitement and clamour', an invitation to consider the dramatic variety of the play.

Context was sometimes a problem here – either too little or not enough, and some of it inaccurate. A number of candidates seemed to think New Orleans was in the North and for some the American Civil War seemed only just to have ended, so that Stanley was the North versus the South, represented by Blanche. More able responses incorporated knowledge of post Second World War American society sensitively but there was also a great deal of biographical material on Williams and his family, some of which was appropriately used to strengthen the argument, some of which was not.

Vulnerability is highlighted within 'A Streetcar Named Desire' through the character of Blanche. The downfall of Blanche Dubois is due to her mental stability, it leads to her being vulnerable to situations therefore she has no control. The constant polka tune of the 'Varsouviana' is played which highlights Blanche's mental stability, Williams explains the 'Music is in her mind; she is drinking to escape it', the excitement and clamour of music which is common in New Orleans also implies Blanche's vulnerability. She wants to 'escape it' as she knows it will lead to her downfall.

The significance of the 'Varsouviana' is implied to show Blanche combating the death of her

husband, she explains that after his death she
 was 'hunting for some protection' further highlighting
 her vulnerability. Blanche had 'many intimacies with
 strangers' but this occurred back in Belle
 Reve, Blanche moves to Elysian fields with
 her old South mentality ~~knowing~~ not knowing
 that Elysian fields is more adapted now
 economically and socially. Blanche being vulnerable
 is the reason for her 'intimacies' so
 she tries to enforce that when she
 arrives to Elysian fields. In her eyes this
 is a new beginning, her catharsis traits
 show her attempt of being pure ~~to~~ through
 her clothing of 'feathers and furs' and lots of
 white. This is ~~contrasted~~ contrasted with the
 men in the play as they 'wear coloured
 shirts, solid blues', 'purple' and 'light green' the men
 are portrayed as dominant here, the 'peak of
 their manhood'.



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This is the opening of an assured answer which makes good use of embedded quotation to support the exploration of vulnerable characters. There is reference to stage directions in support of the argument. However, there is scant reference to contextual aspects here beyond 'her old South mentality'. Later the candidate claims Williams makes no reference to 'context around the world', although more than one character mentions war service. These missed opportunities mean that although the response was able to gain a Level 4 mark for AOs 1 and 2, for AOs 3 and 5 the mark was in Level 3.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

In Section B, AO2 features are there to support, clarify and develop the argument. A response which is structured largely around literary features will struggle to do this.

Context was often the weakest feature in Section B responses; candidates should aim to include contextual references early on in their answers.

Question 10

This question was handled capably by the majority of candidates. A number, however, misread the wording to refer to 'death and *morality*' – though this was not necessarily an issue when they had managed to link death to a lack of morality.

While death of some sort pervades the play, some candidates took effective issue with the terms of the question: Blanche, though a tragic figure, does not die; a child is born; a marriage is saved; an old world is dead, but a new one is in the making. Candidates should never be afraid to challenge.

though he shouldn't have punished himself so harshly for being gay.

Death of values and birth of new ones are very evident in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. The play is set in New Orleans which was a melting pot of different cultures and ethnicities, and ~~the~~ introduced the acceptance of change. ~~Blanche with her old Southern values~~ finds Stanley represents the New America, quoting that "every man is a king" which is a nod to meritocracy. However these changing values mean the death of old ones, and if Stanley represents the New America, then Blanche almost certainly represents the old. Despite this Blanche seems to feel as though Stanley is the one stuck in the Stone Age, dubbing him an 'animal' and ~~st~~ ~~the~~ warning Stella not to "hang back with the brutes" – this reminds us of Blanche's (previous) status/class, and her inability to adapt to these new emerging values;

In her delusion, times are reversing not changing for the better. Contextually, this links in with the Civil War between the North and the South, Civil War could also be seen as a foreshadow of Blanche's impending downfall/rape.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate here develops the argument by reference to the context Williams uses, supported by appropriate embedded quotations. There is some tendency to generalise, however, including an example of a rather unconvincing reference to the Civil War. The clear argument throughout the answer placed the response securely at the top of Level 3 for each section of the marking grid.



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Examiner Tip

To move into the higher level, candidates need to develop specific contextual references as well as engaging in close discussion of the proposition in the question.

Question 11

The Importance of Being Earnest was the second most popular play choice on the paper.

Most candidates were able to engage with this question and to the debate of whether Cecily was either delightful or superficial. There were some effective challenges to the proposition, finding a will of iron behind the façade of triviality. Less able candidates focused on a few narrative details; more able responses included relevant contextual factors and analysis to provide effective answers.

Question 12

This, the more popular question on the play, was generally answered well. Candidates understood how 'secrets and lies' drove the plot and how this was used to create humour; contextually this was often quite neatly linked to Wilde's own double life. There was (as with Tennessee Williams) a tendency for less able candidates to include excessive biography and reference to Wilde's homosexuality without fully securing this to the text or the question.

Oscar Wilde's 'Importance of Being Earnest' presents secrets and lies as an important part of life for Aristocrats. As a "radical aristocrat" and closet homosexual through an era where it was forbidden, Wilde both uses the characters of the play as a mouthpiece - to suggest why lying is potentially important, but also exposes the deception and lies within the Aristocracy, being such an outsider from Victorian morals and values as he was both homosexual and of Irish descent.

Wilde presents lies and deception through Algernon and Jack, and their use of a double-life for their own self-indulgence. Very early on in Act 1, after Algernon discovers about Jack's double life as "Ernest", he exclaims that "you [Jack] are one of the most advanced Bunburyists I know", using Ernest in order "that you may come up to town as often as you like". Algernon then admits that his "Bunbury" saves him from dining with Aunt Augusta as "once a week is quite enough to dine with one's own relations". The double-entendre of "Ernest" could insinuate that Wilde is exposing Victorian Aristocrats as being deceiving and, essentially, liars: Ernest, as well as

a name used by Jack to go to the town as often as he likes, was also a word in old English to suggest honour and truth. This double-entendre ~~points~~^{connotes} how one might not expect a noble Victorian Aristocrat to lie, but in true colours he does indeed. Particular writers from the late 1800s described the 'home' as a "sacred place" for Victorians which is subverted by Algernon who breaks the sacredness of his family unit by escaping "dining" to fulfill his own desires. This is emphasized through "Bunbury" - a pun implying both the "invalid" Algernon has "invented", as well as typically a lazy person who is selfish and disregards the people around him. Here, Wilde exposes ~~Victorian men~~^{the two characters} as truly deceiving and unhonourable, who use lies and secrets to escape the traditional conventional values and priorities of Aristocracy, such as family and nobility.



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These opening paragraphs indicate a grasp of the importance of addressing both the key words and the context. Textual details are used in support, though the discussion of Victorian values is a little simplistic. The response sustained this focus, gaining secure Level 3 marks for both sections of the marking grid.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

The candidate could have broadened the overview of the text by bringing in additional examples of deception rather than explaining this one conversation in such detail.

Question 13

This play attracted a small but well-informed entry, with most answering this question.

Lee Hall gives a pessimistic approach to the class divisions by expressing that class divisions cannot be bridged or bridged in his play *The Pitmen Painters*. This is portrayed via the antithetical relationship between Lynn and the pitmen's language, the contrast between the lives of Lynn and Harry had, Olive's ~~rejection of Helen Sutherland's~~ ^{journey through art} ~~stupid~~ and Hall's employment of stage directions and stichomythia. Hall also highlights the importance of art in order for social change to occur. // para change
Hall immediately creates class divisions between Lynn and the pitmen by his employment of colloquialisms. Olive's ~~speech as he~~ questions Lynn "ye de de art divinil ye?" This use of North-East England colloquialism is contrasted by Lynn's reply "oh terribly sorry, I didn't quite catch that" ~~as~~ demonstrates the class divisions by Hall's use of ~~or colloquialisms~~. Hall further this concept of class divisions through language to express that class divisions are ~~not~~ not bridged or bridged through Harry's speech as

uses political jargon such as "expropriated" and "bourgeoisie" ~~is~~ but then uses colloquialisms such as "knaa" and "worsehoo". The fluctuation in Harry's language goes to show that the working classes cannot bridge class divisions for long. This is ~~prob~~ perhaps due to a lack of education opportunities at the time in Ashington and this is supported by Harry Wilson's description that "there was no grammar school or technical college in Ashington" but only a mining college to train ^{most mines} miners. This is ~~supported~~ in the lack of education causes linguistic and class divisions is expressed by Hall in the play as Oliver states "I left school when we ^[they] were twelve". Therefore, another interpretation of this could be that class divisions are impossible to bridge for long without an equality of opportunity in education.

The contrast between the youths of Lynn and Young had allows Hall to further this idea. Lynn The fact that Lynn went "on a travel scholarship in Rome" whilst Young had spends his time "standing outside every pit in Ashington" in search employment demonstrates the differences between the two in terms of opportunity, thus positioning the audience to question how such divisions could be bridged. Hall's use of the proverb "Rome" helps to exacerbate these divisions. Young had also helps to give the play context as he symbolises the struggle of the



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Examiner Comments

This answer commences by addressing the question in an assured and effective manner. The text is used as the basis for the developing argument, with close use of language details. This is supported on the second page by reference to educational opportunities for the miners, which is in turn the basis for considering an alternative response.

Despite occasional infelicities in expression, this evaluative approach merited Level 5 marks.



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Examiner Tip

Consider not only when a play is set but also when it was written and how audiences respond. Although this play is set in the 1930s and 1940s, it was written in the Twenty-first Century. This response made effective use of this later in the essay by mentioning that 'the audience already knows [through the use of projection] that "no University of Ashington was founded".'

Question 14

The few answers to this question produced effective arguments which were prepared to argue with the premise in the quotation.

Question 15

This play attracted only a handful of response, all of them on this question.

and 'like gypsies', despite the quality and high class of both Helena and Florinda. In everyday real life they would never get the chance to speak of their sexual desires, and Helena takes full advantage of this, asking Willmore 'Can you storm?', to which he replied 'Oh, most friendly!'. Such sexual innuendos and conversation between Helena and Willmore depict the freedom from convention which disguise provides, allowing women the opportunity to engage in immorality and acknowledge their sexualities. Behn may do this to defy the patriarchal society of the time and to promote female sexuality, and the only way she could do this was to set the play in a time of carnival.

In contrast, it may be argued that in actuality the 'freedoms' provided by disguise are largely limited, and that Behn's characters are bound by social constraints, which restrict their behaviour and actions throughout. If the time of carnival was a time of complete freedom, free from convention, then why is there still an underlying sense of a patriarchal society, promoting the objectification of women? When asked of the name of the woman who Blunt

is newly infatuated with, he replies 'Her name? No, sheathkins. What care I for names?', depicting the continuation of male objectification of women, disregarding them as purely sexual objects. This view may be reinforced with the continuity of female vulnerability and passivity, which can be highlighted through Florinda's character, and the many attempts to rape her. In a time of carnival where all inhibitions are lost and the gender roles are reversed, women are still mistreated by men, as outlined in Willmore's attempt to rape Florinda, with Willmore stating 'Why, at this time of night, was your cobweb door set open, dear spider, but to catch flies?'. This implication that Florinda was to blame for teasing and luring Willmore to her indicates the ever ^{negative} strong attitudes towards women by the male characters, which have not been reversed or altered by the carnival or use of disguise at all.

Conversely, some may say that Behn's setting of 'The Rover' in carnival time allowed her characters to engage in freedom of social class, and a social pretense. This almost backwards society of courtesans dressing as women of quality, women of quality dressing as courtesans provides

a distorted presentation of society. Behn does this to promote the message that social



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Examiner Comments

The candidate develops a sophisticated argument here, with a range of literary terms, discriminating argument and secure grasp of context. Sustained throughout, this merited full marks on both sections of the grid.



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Examiner Tip

Without heavy-handed reference to abstract ideas, this illustrates a telling use of a feminist response to the play, amply supported by secure grasp of detail.

Question 16

No responses to this question were seen.

Question 17

This play attracted relatively few but clearly enthusiastic centres. Confident knowledge of the texts was used to develop coherent arguments. Responses were usually supported by detailed and relevant contextual comment without overwhelming the answer with irrelevant material. Most candidates were fully aware of the fact this was a play and able to comment on stage directions, audience response, and staging to help develop their debate on the questions, using AO2 in support of AO5.

In Samuel Beckett's 'Waiting for Godot' it is in fact a tragic-comedy, which is why Vladimir and Estragon never entirely lose hope. Also they have got each other to look after and of course they are tied to this idea that Godot is coming to save them, well one of them.

At the start of the play Estragon and Vladimir meet again only to find out Estragon has been beaten.

'Estragon: Beat me? Certainly they beat me.' From Vladimir's re-assurance and the relationship they have created helps Estragon to look over this. 'Vladimir: What's the good of losing heart now?' The hope that Vladimir and Estragon have is what helps keep them tied together. Estragon being beaten can be reflected from when Beckett himself was stabbed. Beckett met his stabber and asked why he did it, for the response '~~really~~ I don't know, sir'. The uncertainty of why you would try to kill someone should give you no hope for humanity, but Beckett held onto that hope just like Vladimir and Estragon do.

Furthermore, due to the fact that 'Waiting for Godot' is a tragic-comedy, there are many mentions of suicide in the play, however they are concluded with the ridiculous humour.

'Estragon: What about hanging ourselves?'

'Vladimir: Hmm. It'd ~~be~~ give us an erection!'

The absurd ~~to~~ humour gives the play its name of comedy as it is totally bizarre and absurd to think of suicide in ~~that~~ that way. This possibility is reflected in the fact Vladimir and Estragon don't give up ~~their~~ hope because they never actually kill themselves. This supports the idea of existentialism. This idea is thought that we have no meaning to live, unless you give it a meaning. Vladimir and Estragon's relationship give them a meaning to live because without each other they probably would of hung themselves, but they didn't. They have each other to keep holding up this hope.

In addition, religion is a main sub theme in Waiting for Godot and links in well with not losing hope as many ~~pe~~ religious individuals are hopeful because of their religion. Estragon and Vladimir talk about the idea of Godot saving them through the story of the 44 thieves.

'Vladimir: Our Saviour. Two Thieves. One is supposed to have been saved and the other...'

The main reason for Vladimir and Estragon's hope is that they are metaphorically tied to the idea that this unknown character Godot is going to save them.



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Examiner Comments

These are the opening pages of a detailed response to the question. While the expression is at times a little awkward, the argument is supported by apt use of quotation which keeps the debate securely in view. The candidate demonstrates a secure understanding of the relevance of key terms such as tragi-comedy and existentialism. An incident in Beckett's life is made relevant to the action of the play. The answer was awarded Level 4 marks.



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Examiner Tip

Candidates need a grasp of key terms that apply to their text, but should ensure that reference to these arises as an integral part of the discussion of the play.

Question 18

~~and~~ and meaning overrides his dominance in the play as he relies wholly on Estragon ~~for this~~ ^{to provide this} purpose. ~~This is~~ Their reliance on one another becomes evident as Estragon questions "I often wonder if it wouldn't be best for us to part" to which Vladimir replies "you wouldn't go far". Their relationship is more ~~important~~ ^{complex} than ~~simply~~ ~~dominance and~~ being happy together it is a symbiotic relationship that doesn't necessarily benefit both parties in the obvious sense but provides both lines with meaning and therefore is unbreakable. ~~Dominance becomes irrelevant when~~ ^{and equal} ~~the relationship is viewed as equal~~ Vladimir's search for purpose as identified by Benedict Anderson is one of his defining features, the fact that his purpose is in his ~~own~~ relationship with Estragon and his dominance within it would suggest he is not necessarily the dominant force in the play, only in the relationship. ~~The play is about a search for purpose and which~~

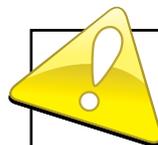
→ The Dominant force in the play by this reading would be the strength of

Their relationship and its symbiotic nature. After the war the importance of human relationships was something that was really valued after the atrocities that were seen during it. The focus on this unbreakable bond and the inseparable nature of Vladimir and Estragon's relationship comes from the acknowledgement of the importance of relationships, (in whatever form) in providing comfort and meaning.



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Examiner Comments

This extract is from the middle of a secure Level 5 answer, demonstrating among other aspects the 'consistently effective argument' and sustained 'evaluative approach' that distinguishes this from the Level 4 example on Q17. The candidate has developed a sophisticated argument with the claim in the question that Vladimir is 'dominant', exploring the 'symbiotic relationship' with Estragon. A critic's comment and a contextual reference are effectively used in support.



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Examiner Tip

More able answers invariably refer to an aspect of the question in each paragraph. Candidates are advised to plan carefully with this in mind.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance in this examination, candidates are offered the following advice:

Section A

More able answers

- Considered the specified topic carefully and selected their poem for comparison with both content and poetic craft in mind.
- Considered the texts first and foremost as poetry.
- Conveyed a sense of each poem as a whole.
- Integrated comparison throughout.
- Embedded details from the texts in their answers.
- Quoted extracts of more than a few words (especially if longer than one line) on separate lines, as verse.
- Explored the writer's craft with well-chosen details, comparing, and, if relevant, contrasting their poems.
- Kept the topic and key words in the question in mind throughout in an effective argument.

Less able answers

- Lacked a coherent shape and overview.
- Lacked a sense of the poems as a whole.
- Had a limited focus, or attempted to go through the poems line by line or stanza by stanza, without addressing the topic set.
- Tackled features and form before considering the overall impact of the poems.
- Treated the poems separately, confining comparison to brief links, introduction and/or conclusion.
- Lacked balance in treatment of the two poems.
- Listed features without examples, or without explaining the effects created.

Section B

More able answers

- Addressed the debate in the question throughout, as part of a carefully shaped argument.
- Supported the discussion by well-chosen details from the play.
- Considered the play as drama, referring to aspects such as stage directions, productions seen or alternative ways of staging.
- Conveyed a sense of the text as a whole and how the topic under discussion related to the structure of the play.
- Integrated exploration of the dramatist's craft into the debate.
- Based contextual references on the text so that these were integral to the examination of the play.
- Were sensitive to different ways in which plays can be received, both at the time of composition and since.

- Were aware that AO3 can include literary context and had a grasp of relevant concepts such as morality play or comedy of manners and how the play might fit, subvert or develop the tradition.
- Ensured that any references to critics or critical schools were directly relevant to the debate and furthered the argument or provided alternative views.
- Were not afraid to be tentative and consider different ways of viewing the play.

Less able answers

- Considered the play chiefly as a story (or even a 'novel') rather than as a dramatic text.
- Treated characters as real people.
- Made sweeping assertions about context, such as 'Victorian values' or attitudes to the Pope, without detailed reference to the play and the specific time of composition.
- Made little reference to contextual factors or incorporated sections of general context without linking these specifically to details in the text.
- Lacked a clear sense of the debate required by the question, relying more on description than discussion of possible responses to the proposition in the quotation.
- Had a narrow focus, for example on one character or part of the play when the question had a wider application.

As a final note, examiners continue to be troubled by some cases of poor handwriting. Candidates should be reminded that clear writing makes it easier for the marker to follow their argument.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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