

A LEVEL
Teacher Guide

ENGLISH LITERATURE

H472/02
For first teaching in 2015

**Comparative and contextual
study: 'Unseen' extracts
for Critical Appreciation
Questions**

Version 1



Contents

Introduction	3
Extracts	4
American Literature 1880-1940	
Willa Cather: My Antonia	4
Theodore Dreiser: Sister Carrie	5
The Gothic	
Cormac McCarthy: Outer Dark	6
William Faulkner: Light in August	7
Dystopia	
Cormac McCarthy: The Road	8
Ray Bradbury: Fahrenheit 451	9
Women in Literature	
Jeanette Winterson: Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit	10
Sylvia Plath: The Bell Jar	11
The Immigrant Experience	
Andrea Levy: Small Island	12
Kate Grenville: The Secret River	13
Indicative content	
American Literature 1880-1940	14
The Gothic	15
Dystopia	16
Women in Literature	17
The Immigrant Experience	18

Introduction

This guide has been designed to support the development of students' close reading skills for the critical appreciation questions of H472/02 Comparative and contextual study.

The extracts in this guide are taken from suggested set texts provided for each of the five topic areas. The extracts have been chosen to support the teaching of the chosen topic area rather than for assessment purposes but indicative content is provided to offer suggestions of the kinds of things students may want to consider when relating these extracts to their wider study.

Due to copyright restrictions, extracts have been limited to under 400 words. Suggestions for lengthier extracts are provided to enable teachers to provide extracts which more closely resemble the length of those that students will encounter in the exam.



Extracts

American Literature 1880 – 1940

Write a critical appreciation of the passage, relating your discussion to your reading of American Literature 1880-1940. [30]

[Otto] Fuchs had been a cowboy, a stage-driver, a bartender, a miner; had wandered all over that great Western country and done hard work everywhere, though, as grandmother said, he had nothing to show for it. Jake was duller than Otto. He could scarcely read, wrote even his name with difficulty, and he had a violent temper which sometimes made him behave like a crazy man—tore him all to pieces and actually made him ill. But he was so soft-hearted that anyone could impose upon him. If he, as he said, 'forgot himself' and swore before grandmother, he went about depressed and shamefaced all day. They were both of them jovial about the cold in winter and the heat in summer, always ready to work overtime and to meet emergencies. It was a matter of pride with them not to spare themselves. Yet they were the sort of men who never get on, somehow, or do anything but work hard for a dollar or two a day.

On those bitter, starlit nights, as we sat around the old stove that fed us and warmed us and kept us cheerful, we could hear the coyotes howling down by the corrals, and their hungry, wintry cry used to remind the boys of wonderful animal stories; about grey wolves and bears in the Rockies, wildcats and panthers in the Virginia mountains. Sometimes Fuchs could be persuaded to talk about the outlaws and desperate characters he had known. I remember one funny story about himself that made grandmother, who was working her bread on the bread-board, laugh until she wiped

her eyes with her bare arm, her hands being floury. It was like this:

When Otto left Austria to come to America, he was asked by one of his relatives to look after a woman who was crossing on the same boat, to join her husband in Chicago. The woman started off with two children, but it was clear that her family might grow larger on the journey. Fuchs said he 'got on fine with the kids,' and liked the mother, though she played a sorry trick on him. In mid-ocean she proceeded to have not one baby, but three! This event made Fuchs the object of undeserved notoriety, since he was travelling with her. The steerage stewardess was indignant with him, the doctor regarded him with suspicion.

Willa Cather, *My Antonia* (1918)

Cather, W (1918) *My Antonia*; Oxford World's Classics; OUP Oxford, 2008.

ISBN-10: 019953814X

ISBN-13: 978-0199538140

This extract has been edited. The full extract is available here: ['My Antonia' extract](#).

Extract extension: to "Now, did you ever hear of a young feller's having such hard luck, Mrs. Burden?"



Write a critical appreciation of the passage, relating your discussion to your reading of American Literature 1880-1940.

[30]

Ah, his fine position, his elegant office; how had he cut himself off from that. Tomorrow his friends would come—Marvin, Phillips, Anderson, the whole fine, well-dressed, well situated throng which he knew. What would they think, how would they look, what would they say? Oh, the fineness of the thing from which he had cut himself—the friends, the standing. Yes, the wrath of his wife—her lawyers' letter—he knew all about that, but what was it after all? Certainly no excuse for such a crazy, idiotic, horrible thing like this he had fallen into. He could have gotten out all right. He could have acceded to his wife's demands; he could have given in and straightened it out with her. Why had he not done so—oh, why had he not done so? What would he do now, far off in Canada without anyone he knew. He could not meet his old friends; he could not use his own name. He would have to drop that and adopt some other. He would have to explain to Carrie. Oh, what a mixup. How had he jumped from the frying pan into the fire. The ills he had borne: how much easier it would have been to have borne them than to fly thus to these he knew not of. He could not understand how he had come to do it. He must have been mad, drunk and demoniac. He could not explain it upon any grounds whatever.

This train of thought was a burden to carry. It rocked his brain and dampened his brow. It made his head ache and caused him to be nervous and fearful. He was in a subdued mood and yet staringly clear. He could not sleep, could not feel good enough to stay awake. [He] was wretched and waited with dogged patience until he could get into Canada. Maybe, over there, he would feel better.

The minutes passed and with them came fitful, nervous dozing to both. They were brought to by the early light of the morning, which now glimmered in the east. The rain had ceased. On either hand, wet green fields and lovely woodland prospects were scudding by. Carrie was too troubled and weary to appreciate such things, much as they usually appealed to her. Hurstwood had no taste for such things. It was Canada for him or nothing.

Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie* (1900)

Dreiser, T (1900) *Sister Carrie*; Penguin Classics; Reprint edition; 1981.

ISBN-10: 0140390022

ISBN-13: 978-0140390025

This extract has been edited. The full extract is available here: [‘Sister Carrie’ extract](#) (p.283-284).

Extract extension: to ‘*She was so pretty in her distress. He would have given a great deal to have restored her to confidence and affection.*’

The Gothic

Write a critical appreciation of this passage, relating your discussion to your reading of the Gothic.

[30]

She goes right along, don't she, he called to the ferryman above the howling water, but the ferryman was busy at his ropes, his mariner's cap skewed on his head, watching upward at the cable beneath which they ran and where the rings were now screeching in a demented fiddlenote. At the front of the boat the horse nickered¹ and clapped one hoof on the boards. [...] They appeared to be racing sideways upriver against the current. The barge shuddered heavily and a sheet of water came rearward and circled the capstan² and fanned with a thin hiss. Then there was a loud explosion and something passed above their heads screaming and then there was silence. The ferry lurched and came about and the wall of water receded and they were drifting in windless calm and total dark.

Holme splashed forward. There was no sound. Ho, he called. He could see nothing. He felt his way along the gunwale. Something reared up out of the dark before him with a strangled cry and he fell to the deck, scrabbling backwards as the hoofs sliced past him and burst against the planking. He clambered crabwise back along the deck, wet now and very cold. Ho there, he called. Nothing answered. It's tied, he said. But it wasn't tied. When he crossed to the other side he heard it go down the deck and whinny and crash and then he heard it coming back. His eyeballs ached. He dropped to the deck and crawled beneath the rail, up in the scuppers³, and the horse pounded past and crashed in the bow. He pulled himself up and started for the rear of the barge and then he heard it

coming again. He clawed at the darkness before him, cursing, throwing himself to the deck again while the horse went past with a sound like pistolfire. He waited, his cheek against the cold wood. The barge drifted, swung slowly about, trembling. A race of water wandered over the deck, ran coldly upon him, in his shirt and down his boots and receded again. He could not hear the horse. He could hear the sandy seething of the river beneath him. After a while he rose and started back up the deck. A black fog had set in and he could feel it needling on his face and against his blind eyeballs.

Cormac McCarthy, *Outer Dark* (1968)

McCarthy, C (1968) *Outer Dark*; Picador; 2010.
ISBN-10: 033051122X
ISBN-13: 978-0330511223

This extract has been edited. The full extract available here: ['Outer Dark' extract](#).

Extract extension: to '*As if all that fury had been swallowed up in the river traceless as fire. The barge rocked gently and ceased.*'

¹ Gave a soft neigh

² Vertical rotating machine used to wind in ropes

³ Opening in side of the ship at deck level for excess water to drain off



Write a critical appreciation of this passage, relating your discussion to your reading of the Gothic [30]

MOVING quietly, he took the rope from its hiding place. [I]t took him no time at all to reach the ground; now, with more than a year of practice, he could mount the rope hand over hand, without once touching the wall of the house, with the shadowlike agility of a cat. [...] He slid down the rope, passing swift as a shadow across the window where the old people slept. Then he went on through the moonlight to the stable and took the new suit from its hiding place. Before unwrapping it he felt with his hands about the folds of the paper. 'He found it,' he thought. 'He knows.' He said aloud, whispering: "The bastard."

He dressed in the dark, swiftly. He was already late. [...] He put on the coat so that the white shirt would not be so visible in the moonlight. He emerged from the stable. It was as though in the moonlight the house had acquired personality: threatening, deceptive. He passed it and entered the lane.

The lane went straight beneath the moon, bordered on each side by trees whose shadowed branches lay thick and sharp as black paint upon the mild dust. The highroad passed the lane a short distance ahead. He expected at any moment to see the car rush past, since he had told her that if he were not waiting at the mouth of the lane, he would meet her at the schoolhouse where the dance was being held. But no car passed, and when he reached the highroad he could hear nothing. The road, the night, were empty. 'Maybe she has already passed,' he thought. [...] He looked up the lane, believing that he had seen movement among the shadows. Then he thought that he had not, that it might perhaps have been something in his mind projected like a shadow on a wall. 'But I hope it is him,' he thought. 'I wish he would follow me and see me get into the car. I wish he would try to stop me.' But he could see nothing in the lane. Then he heard, from far down the road toward town, the sound of the car. Looking, he saw presently the glare of the lights.

She was a waitress in a small, dingy, back street restaurant in town. Even a casual adult glance could tell that she would never see thirty again.

William Faulkner, *Light in August* (1932)

Faulkner, W (1932) *Light in August*; Vintage; 2005.

ISBN-10: 0099283158

ISBN-13: 978-0099283157

This extract has been edited. The full extract is available here: ['Light in August' extract](#).



Dystopia

Write a critical appreciation of this passage, relating your discussion to your reading of dystopian literature. [30]

When he woke in the woods in the dark and the cold of the night he'd reach out to touch the child sleeping beside him. Nights dark beyond darkness and the days more gray each one than what had gone before. Like the onset of some cold glaucoma dimming away the world. His hand rose and fell softly with each precious breath. He looked toward the east for light but there was none. In the dream from which he'd wakened he had wandered in a cave where the child led him by the hand. Like pilgrims in a fable swallowed up and lost among the inward parts of some granitic beast. Deep stone flues where the water dripped and sang. Tolling in the silence the minutes of the earth and the hours and the days of it and the years without cease. Until they stood in a great room where lay a black and ancient lake. And on the far shore a creature that raised its dripping mouth from the rimstone pool and stared into the light with eyes dead white and sightless as the eggs of spiders. Crouching there pale and naked and translucent, its alabaster bones cast up in shadow on the rocks behind it. Its bowels, its beating heart. The brain that pulsed in a dull glass bell. It swung its head from side to side and then gave out a low moan and turned and lurched away and loped soundlessly into the dark.

With the first gray light he rose and left the boy sleeping and walked out to the road and squatted and studied the country to the south. Barren, silent, godless. He thought the month was October but he wasn't sure. He hadn't kept a calendar for years. They were moving south. There'd be no surviving another winter here.

When it was light enough to use the binoculars he glassed the valley below. Everything paling away into the murk. He studied what he could see. The segments of road down there among the dead trees. Looking for anything of color. Any movement. [...] Then he just sat there holding the binoculars and watching the ashen daylight congeal over the land. He knew only that the child was his warrant. He said: If he is not the word of God God never spoke.

Cormac McCarthy, *The Road* (2006)

McCarthy, C (2006) *The Road*; Picador; Reprints edition, 2009.

ISBN-10: 0330468464

ISBN-13: 978-0330468466

This extract has been edited. The full extract is available here:

['The Road' extract.](#)



Write a critical appreciation of this passage, relating your discussion to your reading of dystopian literature.

[30]

'So now do you see why books are hated and feared? They show the pores in the face of life. Do you know the legend of Antaeus, the giant wrestler, whose strength was incredible so long as he stood firmly on the earth. But when he was held, rootless, in mid-air, by Hercules, he perished easily. If there isn't something in that legend for us in this city, in our time, then I am completely insane. Well, there we have the first thing we need. Quality information.'

'And the second?'

'Leisure.'

If you're not driving a hundred miles an hour, where you can't think of anything but the danger, then you're playing some game or sitting in some room where you can't argue with the four-wall televisor. Why? The televisor is "real". It is immediate, it has dimension. It tells you what to think and blasts it in. It must be right. It seems so right. It rushes you on so quickly your mind hasn't time to protest.'

'My wife says books aren't "real".'

'Thank God for that. You can shut them, say, "Hold on a moment." You play God to it. But who has ever torn himself from the claw that encloses you when you drop a seed in a TV parlour? It grows you any shape it wishes! It is an environment as real as the world. It becomes and is the truth. Books can be beaten down with reason. But with all my knowledge and skepticism, I have never been able to argue with full colour, three dimensions, and I being in and part of those incredible parlours. As you see, my parlour is nothing but four plaster walls.'

'Where do we go from here? Would books help us?'

'Only if the third necessary thing could be given us.'

Number one: quality of information. Number two: leisure to digest it. And number three: the right to carry out actions based on what we learn from the first two.

'I can get books.'

'You're running a risk.'

'That's the good part of dying; when you've got nothing to lose, you run any risk you want.'

'There, you've said an interesting thing,' laughed Faber, 'without having read it!'

'Are things like that in books? But it came off the top of my mind!'

'All the better. You didn't fancy it up for me or anyone, even yourself.'

Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451* (1953)

Bradbury, R (1953) *Fahrenheit 451*; Flamingo; New Ed edition, 1999.

ISBN-10: 0006546064

ISBN-13: 978-0006546061

This extract has been edited. The full extract is available here: ['Fahrenheit 451' extract](#).



Women in Literature

Write a critical appreciation of the passage, relating your discussion to your reading concerning Women in Literature. [30]

Other men I knew weren't much better. The man who ran the post office was bald and shiny with hands too fat for the sweet jars.

'Sweet hearts for a sweet heart,' he laughed. Sweet I was not. But I was a little girl, ergo, I was sweet, and here were sweets to prove it. [A]ll of them heart-shaped and all of them said things like,

Maureen 4 Ken

I was confused. Everyone always said you found the right man.

My mother said it, which was confusing.

The man in the post office sold it on sweets.

But there was the problem of the woman married to the pig⁴, and the spotty boy who took girls down backs⁵.

That afternoon I went to the library. I went the long way, so as to miss the couples. They made funny noises that sounded painful, and the girls were always squashed against the wall. In the library I felt better, words you could trust, they couldn't change half way through a sentence like people, so it was easier to spot a lie. I read one called 'Beauty and the Beast.'

In this story, a beautiful young woman finds herself the forfeit of a bad bargain made by her father. As a result she has to marry an ugly beast or dishonor her family forever. Because she is good, she obeys. On her wedding night, she gets into bed with the beast, and feeling pity that everything should be so ugly, gives it a little kiss. Immediately, the beast is transformed into a handsome young prince, and they both live happily ever after.

I wondered if the woman married to a pig had read this story. She must have been awfully disappointed if she had.

It was clear that I had stumbled on a terrible conspiracy.

There are women in the world.

There are men in the world.

And there are beasts.

What do you do if you marry a beast?

Kissing them doesn't always help.

Why had no one told me? Did that mean no one else knew?

Did that mean that all over the globe, in all innocence, women were marrying beasts?

There were a lot of women, and most of them got married: If they couldn't marry each other, and I didn't think they could, because of having babies, some of them would inevitably have to marry beasts.

Jeanette Winterson, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (1985)

Winterson, J (1985) *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit*; Vintage, 2014.

ISBN-10: 0099598183

ISBN-13: 978-0099598183

This extract has been edited. The full extract is available here:

['Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit' extract.](#)

Extract extension: to 'It wasn't fair that a whole street should be full of beasts.'

⁴ A woman on the street who claimed she was married to a horrible man

⁵ Took girls behind the houses into the alleys for sexual encounters

Write a critical appreciation of the passage, relating your discussion to your reading concerning Women in Literature.

[30]

I tried to imagine what it would be like if Constantin were my husband.

It would mean getting up at seven and cooking him eggs, bacon, toast and coffee and dawdling about to wash up the dirty plates and make the bed. I'd spend the evening washing up even more dirty plates till I fell into bed, utterly exhausted.

This seemed a wasted life for a girl of fifteen years of straight A's, but I knew that's what marriage was like, because cook and clean and wash was just what Buddy Willard's mother did from morning till night, and she was the wife of a university professor and had been a private school teacher herself.

Once I found Mrs Willard braiding a rug out of strips of wool from Mr Willard's old suits. She'd spent weeks on that rug, but after she was through, she put it down in place of her kitchen mat, and in a few days it was soiled and dull and indistinguishable for any mat you could buy for under a dollar.

And I knew that in spite of all the roses and kisses and restaurant dinners a man showered on a woman before he married her, what he secretly wanted when the wedding service ended was for her to flatten out underneath his feet like Mrs Willard's kitchen mat.

So I began to think maybe it was true that when you were married and had children it was like being brainwashed.

As I stared down at Constantin the way you stare down at a bright, unattainable pebble at the bottom of a deep well, his eyelids lifted and he looked through me, and his eyes were full of love. I watched dumbly as a little shutter of recognition clicked across the blur of tenderness and the wide pupils went glossy and depthless as patent leather.

Constantin yawned. 'What time is it?'

'Three,' I said in a flat voice. 'I better go home.'

'I'll drive you.'

As we sat back to back on our separate sides of the bed fumbling with our shoes in the horrid cheerful white light of the bed lamp, I sensed Constantin turn round. 'Is your hair always like that?'

'Like what?'

He didn't answer but reached over and put his hand at the root of my hair and ran his fingers out slowly to the tip ends like a comb.

Sylvia Plath, *The Bell Jar* (1963)

Plath, S (1963) *The Bell Jar*; Faber & Faber; Main edition, 2005.

ISBN-10: 0571226167

ISBN-13: 978-0571226160

This extract has been edited. The full extract is available here:

[‘The Bell Jar’ extract.](#)

Extract extension: to 'Ever since I was small I loved feeling somebody comb my hair. It made me go all sleepy and peaceful.'



The Immigrant Experience

Write a critical appreciation of the passage, relating your discussion to your reading concerning the Immigrant Experience. [30]

See me walking in the London street with the rain striking me cold as steel pins. My head bent low, wrapping my arms around me to keep the cold from killing me. All we ex-RAF servicemen who, lordly in our knowledge of England, had looked to those stay-at-home boys to inform them that we knew what to expect from the Mother Country. The lion's mouth may be open, we told them, but we had counted all its teeth. But, come, let's face it, only now were we starting to feel its bite.

Take Eugene. This mild-mannered man was going about his business when an old woman trip on the kerb and fall down in front of him. He rush to her side, his hand out for her to hold. 'Let me help you up – come, are you hurt?' This nice old English lady took one look at him and scream. She yell so bad the police came running. Eugene was taken away. The charge? Attacking an old lady.

A devout Christian, Curtis was asked not to return to his local church for his skin was too dark to worship there.

Louis now believed bloodyforeigner to be all one word. For he only ever heard those words spoken together.

Regret had its hand clasped to my throat, my desire smothered and choking. Then I heard someone call after me. I took no notice. A shriek of surprise: what coloured man in England would look to stare when they heard that? But it came again this time with words, 'Excuse me, excuse me.' And the

clip clop of a woman's footfall along the pavement. I stopped and, turning slowly, I saw a tiny woman approach me. Out of breath, smiling, she looked up in my face. 'You dropped this, I think,' she said. It was a black glove. I was not sure it was mine but beguiled by the gesture I took it from her.

As I parted my lips to thank her no words came.

'Are you all right?' she asked me.

A tear was on my face. I could feel its damp, itchy path creeping down my chin.

She took her hand and laid it on my arm. 'Are you all right? You look cold. It's a cold night.'

'Yes,' I said. The place where her hand was on me was melting with the warmth of that gentle touch.

Andrea Levy, *Small Island* (2004)

Levy, A (2004) *Small Island*; Tinder Press; Revised ed. Edition Main, 2004.

ISBN-10: 075530750X

ISBN-13: 978-0755307500

This extract has been edited. The full extract is available here:

['Small Island' extract.](#)





Write a critical appreciation of the passage, relating your discussion to your reading concerning the Immigrant Experience. [30]

Most of all, she had longed for trees: real trees, she insisted, with proper leaves that fell off in the autumn. She showed him where she wanted them, in a double row up from the river all the way to the house. He guessed what she saw as she looked down the slope: the carriageway at Cobham Hall, a whispering green tunnel that cast dappled shadows on the ground. He did not mock her for it. A person was entitled to draw any picture they fancied on the blank slate of this new place.

Jerome Griffin in Sydney was an enterprising fellow who was making a good thing for himself out of poplars for homesick ladies, his being the only poplars on this continent, and Thornhill bought up his entire stock. The delight of laying about him with his money was one he did not think would ever grow stale.

Twice a day, Thornhill saw Sal urging Ned and the other men – they had seven servants now – to refill the water cart and give the new plants yet another bucket of water. Her day became a battle against the sun that would draw the moisture out of the ground.

In spite of her care the garden did not thrive.

The only plant that flourished was a bush of blood-red geraniums that she had got as a cutting from Mrs Herring. They gave off a musty sort of smell, but at least they provided a splash of colour.

Of the two dozen poplars they had planted, most became nothing more than twigs after a few weeks. Sal could not bear to pull them out of the ground. When the wind blew, the corpses swiveled in the ground in a parody of life.

She loved the survivors all the more for the deaths of the others. At dusk she would go and stand in the triangle made by the three remaining saplings. Their glossy green leaves twittered and shivered together on their long stems. He watched her sometimes, standing among them. Watched her pick a leaf to feel its cool familiar silkiness. She would touch the tender new growth as she touched the cheeks of the children and sometimes Thornhill thought she talked to them as she stood in the dusk fingering their heart-shaped leaves. *Bury me when I go*, she told him. *So I can feel the leaves fall on me.*

Kate Grenville, *The Secret River* (2005)

Grenville, K (2005) *The Secret River*; Canongate Books; Main edition, 2011.

ISBN-10: 0857860844

ISBN-13: 978-0857860842

This extract has been edited. The full extract is available here: [‘The Secret River’ extract](#).

Indicative content

Critical appreciation of an unseen passage (close reading)

AO2 is the dominant assessment objective for this section. The weightings for the Assessment Objectives in this question are:

AO2: 75%

AO3: 12.5%

AO1: 12.5%

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

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

AO1: Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.

The mark scheme for H472/02 provides further detail on the Level Descriptors for this question.

The indicative content in this guide is intended to indicate aspects of questions that may feature in students' responses. It is not prescriptive, nor is it exclusive; original but well-focused answers and implicit as well as explicit responses to questions would be rewarded in an exam.

American Literature 1880-1940

Extract from Willa Cather: *My Antonia*

Answers are likely to consider ideas associated with the West and the frontier, as well as the industry of Fuchs (and his itinerant working life accentuated by the list, 'Fuchs had been ... nothing to show for it').

One might also see the paradox of the American Dream (hard work does NOT always lead to financial success: see also, 'Yet they were the sort of men ... dollar or two a day').

The harshness of the Frontier and life in the West (perhaps not living up to the ideals of the American Dream) might be commented upon.

The anecdote about the difficult journey to America and the birth of triplets might be read figuratively: journey metaphor; fecundity; 'birth' of a new nation etc.

Extract from Theodore Dreiser: *Sister Carrie*

Answers are likely to consider the narrative perspective (omniscient; dual perspective). The repetition of 'well' and interrogatives might suggest a questioning of the self. The parallel structure, 'He could have...' again suggest Hurstwood's frustration with his course of action. The parenthetical statement, 'her lawyer's letter' is telling and perhaps reveals his key preoccupation/ concern. The importance of 'he could not use his own name' might be explored (and the significance of names and using them in the core texts might lead to fruitful AO3). This is reinforced by 'he would have to drop that [his name]'. There is odd/ archaic syntax, 'fly thus to these he knew not of'. The metaphor, 'The train of thought was a burden to carry' might be explored.

There is odd/ archaic syntax, 'fly thus to these he knew not of'. The metaphor, 'The train of thought was a burden to carry' might be explored.

The latter part of the passage is more hopeful and positive: 'early light of the morning, which now glimmered in the east.' There is the pathetic fallacy of 'The rain ceased'; also, 'wet green fields and lovely woodland prospects were scudding by'.

In terms of links to contexts, candidates might consider the importance of position and hierarchy as going against the ideals of the American Dream and meritocracy ('standing'). 'Canada. Maybe, over there, he would feel better': notion of starting afresh/ recreating oneself ('fresh green breast of the world' – *The Great Gatsby*). There is also the significance of the railroad/ trains and the 'journey' metaphor that is central to much American literature. Notions of East/ West might be considered.

The Gothic

Extract from Cormac McCarthy: *Outer Dark*

Answers are likely to consider the setting of night time and the sensory deprivation of the characters as means by which McCarthy creates tension and suspense, 'Something reared up out of the dark'... 'Nothing answered'. The verb choices are typically gothic, 'screeching', 'cry', 'clawed', 'screaming' and 'exploding': redolent of pain, suffering and extremes. Extremes are seen in phrases such as 'breaking violently', perpetual concussion, 'enormous concussion'. The metaphor, 'a perpetual concussion of black surf' suggests confusion, pain and possibly evil ('dark'); also, 'an enormous concussion of water'.

McCarthy's use of personification, 'a sheet of water came rearward and circled the capstan and fanned with a thin hiss' suggests the elements are evil ('hiss') and conspiring against the characters; 'The ferry lurched' suggests motions out of control. 'Demented', 'howled' ('wildly') might also be seen as suggesting madness: a key gothic trope. The actions and behavior of the horse might invite comment: anthropomorphism, ('The horse reared before him black and screaming') is unsettling as are the perhaps largely unknown reasons for its extreme behavior.

In terms of links to contexts, learners might see the 'ferryman' as Charon from Greek mythology, taking dead souls across the River Styx to Hades. There are many tropes of gothic fiction present in the passage: darkness, madness, confusion, suspense, heightened emotions et al.

Extract from William Faulkner: *Light in August*

Answers are likely to consider the omniscient narration and the consequent ability to have insight into the protagonist's thought processes and Faulkner's characterisation: ('He had been made late by them who had given him no opportunity to wind the watch and so know if he were late or not'; 'the woman had caused by meddling'). Does this internal logic suggest a man who is mentally unhinged? Additionally, Faulkner withholds information/ is deliberately vague to interest the reader and create suspense: the purpose of the rope; 'But he did not need the watch to tell him that he was already late' (for what?).

Personification is frequently employed, 'the rope from its hiding place'; he let the free end whisper down'; 'took the new suit from its hiding place'; 'The house squatted in the moonlight, dark, profound, a little treacherous'; 'the house had acquired personality: threatful, deceptive'. Repetition of 'hiding place' and the surreptitious nature of the protagonist's actions might be explored. The blurring of reality and imagination (liminal state) might be addressed, 'believing that he had seen movement among the shadows in the lanes. Then he thought ... it might perhaps been something in his mind'. The stealthy, surreptitious movements of the protagonist might be seen; parallel structures, 'I wish...' might suggest he is unhinged. The ending, 'Even a casual adult glance could tell she would never see thirty again' creates a sense of foreboding. Similes are seen: whose shadowed branches...mild dust'; 'passing swift as a shadow', as are other comparisons, ('In the moonlight it looked ... spider skein.')

The setting of the scene at night is significant and will allow links to several gothic tropes: darkness, liminal states, moonlight (madness) et al.



Dystopia

Extract from Cormac McCarthy: *The Road*

Answers are likely to consider a range of techniques employed by McCarthy to create an inhospitable environment and landscape. These might include some of the following: the repetition of 'dark' and 'cold' (and their lexical field); the absence of light; references to 'grey' and the associations with stasis; verbs such as 'tolling' and 'congeal' and their unpleasant connotations; listing, 'Barren, silent, godless.' Some might note McCarthy's use of non-standard grammatical structures, unusual syntax and minor sentences, as well as the direct and matter-of-fact tone employed by the omniscient narrator. The use of plurals, 'Nights dark... days more gray' show how this has been the state of things for some time. McCarthy's (characteristic) use of elaborate similes (conceits) will be of interest: 'Like the onset of some cold glaucoma dimming away the world,' 'Like pilgrims in a fable swallowed up and lost...' and 'eyes dead white and sightless as the eggs of spiders.' The haunting, grotesque description of the 'creature' may invite discussion of McCarthy's techniques, but also what it might represent symbolically or as a metonym.

In terms of making reference to relevant tropes from the genre, candidates might pick up of the sense of fear and the dark imagery to suggest this world is 'bad'; the sense of struggle 'there'd be no surviving another winter'; death; a glimmer of hope in the godless, post-Apocalyptic world 'If he [the boy] is not the word of God God never spoke.'

Extract from Ray Bradbury: *Fahrenheit 451*

Answers are likely to consider the clues that this is set in the future, but one recognizably a reflection of our own. The 'four-wall televisior' (and 'the subway-jets') are futuristic. 'If you're not driving a hundred miles an hour' might also resonate with our culture of things moving increasingly fast (cars, information, internet etc). The lexical field of control and restraint of personal freedom can be seen, ('the claw that encloses').

The dystopian trope of enforced passivity is seen with, 'The televisior ... It tells you what to think' and 'sitting in some room where you can't argue'. The sense of powerlessness of the individual is seen with the allusion to Hercules and Antaeus; 'he was held, rootless, in mid-air'. The metaphor about books, 'They show the pores in the face of life' might allow candidates to discuss how books might be seen as dangerous, seditious etc. Anything sensible could be rewarded here.

Interrogatives might be seen to suggest questioning due to a lack of understanding or standing up to the status quo. Repetition of 'in', 'If there isn't something in that legend for us today in this city, in our time...' suggests a determination about the character.

The repeated references to books might well be seen in the context in which the novel was written (post-WWII) and the burning of the books; rise of Stalin; post-WWII paranoia and fear of the spread of Communism etc. (AO3).



Women in Literature

Extract from Jeanette Winterson: *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit*

Answers are likely to consider gender expectations of women in society, 'sweet I was not' (syntax here); Winterson signals this through the reference to 'sweet' as a characteristic and as confectionary. The child-narrator 'But I was a little girl' signals a naïve perspective that Winterson employs to make comments about gender stereotyping, 'Everyone always said you found the right man'. This is created further by the parallel structures, suggesting a child's logic: 'There are women in the world. There are men in the world'.

Repetition of 'all of them' referring to 'heart-shaped' and the 'Maureen 4 Ken' and 'Jack'n'Jill, True' might suggest the pervasive attitudes ... The parallel structures of 'My mother said it, which was confusing' and 'May auntie said it, which was even more confusing' emphasise the similarity of advice about gender roles from adult females. The wary and sinister tone created by 'the woman married to the pig, and the spotty boy who took girls down backs' might be explored. The repeated use of interrogatives, 'Why had no one told me? Did that mean no one else knew?' suggests the confusion of the narrator about roles of men and women. Some candidates may suggest this relates to narrator's confused sexuality, perhaps seen also with 'The minister was a man, but wore a skirt, so that made him special'.

The references to Beauty and the Beast characterising men as beasts, cunning and wolfish might be analysed. There is the representation of stereotypical gender roles, with the man as bad the woman as good: 'Because she is good, she obeys'. The supposed transformative powers of love and marriage is humorously undercut by 'I wondered if the woman married to a pig had read the story. She must have been awfully disappointed if she had'.

Relevant contexts that might be explored: gender roles; patriarchy; women presented as passive, 'sweet' et al.

Extract from Sylvia Plath: *The Bell Jar*

Answers are likely to consider the first person female narrator. The sense of routine and subservience to the husband is shown through verbs such as 'dawdling about'. The sense of loss of female identity/ stature is a theme in the passage ('This seemed a dreary and wasted life for a girl with fifteen years of straight As'). Marriage is seen as mundane and a form of domestic drudgery through the alliteration/ list, 'cook and clean and wash'.

Mrs Willard's 'mat' may be seen symbolically, 'spent weeks on' braiding it and 'in a few days it was soiled and dull and indistinguishable from any mat': loss of female identity as a consequence of marriage. Traditional romantic gestures 'roses and kisses' are seen cynically, ('now we can stop pretending'). The suggestion that marriage 'was like being brainwashed' and 'the wide pupils went glossy' suggests negative aspects of love and marriage. The personification in 'horrid cheerful white light of the bed lamp' might be explored.

Relevant contexts that might be explored are the male/ female gender roles (husband at work; wife at home); female as passive/ male as active; female controlled by male (his 'fondling' of her hair); the narrator's internalisation of gender 'norms' from her own mother and father et al.



The Immigrant Experience

Extract from Andrea Levy: *Small Island*

Answers are likely to consider the narrator's non-Standard English structures with verbs missing suffixes, 'old woman trip' and 'He rush to' and 'fall down' showing lack of mastery of tense system of the language. There is much figurative language which candidates might explore. The extended metaphor of the symbol of England (the lion and its links to national pride, Richard I) shows at once the contrast between the supposed welcoming [dream] from the new country 'lion's mouth may be open' and the reality 'counted all its teeth' & 'starting to feel its bite'. Personification: 'Regret had its hand clasped to my throat' shows signs of lack of freedom in this new country.

The compounding of 'bloody foreigner' might be explored. The physical effects of the endemic racism might be seen: ('Eugene sweat himself scrawny') and 'The shock rob him of his voice'. Candidates may see the kindness of the English woman toward the end of the passage as a contrast to the cruelty aimed at Eugene earlier in the passage.

Opportunities to link to the wider reading might be seen with the trope of the reality of a new life not living up to the dreams: 'All of us pitiful West Indian dreamers ... heads bursting with foolishness were a joke'. The 'Mother Country' with its capitalisation might be explored in relation to themes of homesickness et al.

Extract from Kate Grenville: *The Secret River*

Answers are likely to consider the sadness and sense of homesickness of Sal ('she'): the phrasal verb 'longed for', 'homesick ladies' and 'Bury me when I go ... So I can feel the leaves fall upon me'. The personification, 'a whispering green tunnel that cast dappled shadows on the ground' suggests that Sal might be imagining her home country where plants grow more readily. 'Jerome Griffin was an enterprising fellow' might suggest exploitation of others' homesickness and desire to recreate aspects of their home country in a new one. The inhospitable climate is emphasized by, 'Her day became a battle against the sun ... the hot wind ...' and the idea of a new country representing a fresh start is shown with 'A person was entitled to draw any picture they fancied on the blank slate of this new place'.

The latter section of the passage might be read more figuratively with the garden reflecting Sal's feeling towards Australia. 'The garden did not thrive' might be her struggling to enjoy her new country. ('The roses never put their roots down') suggests Sal's own rootlessness. The verbs 'yellowed and shrivelled' reinforce the idea of Sal not thriving in Sydney. The only plants that do flourish are the 'blood-red' and 'musty' geraniums: the unpleasant connotations of 'blood' and 'musty' might be explored; in a similar way 'the corpses swiveled in the ground in a parody of life' and 'Bury me when I go' show a possible preoccupation with death. The 'parody of life' might be Sal's own feelings at the unreal life she is living. Other phrases that might be interpreted figuratively include, 'cool familiar silkiness', 'tender new growth', 'heart-shaped leaves' and the personification of 'Their glossy green leaves twittered and shivered'.

Relevant contexts that might be explored include Sal as non-native living in Australia ('Sydney'); they might see Sal ('she') as English, 'Cobham Hall'. Ideas of root(lessness), ('The roses never put their roots down'); being unable to settle and recreate the home country might all be ways to draw in the wider reading.





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