

GCSE (9–1)
Candidate Style Answers

ENGLISH LITERATURE

J352
For first teaching in 2015

Component 02 Section A: Poetry across time - Conflict

Version 3



COMPONENT 2

SECTION A: POETRY ACROSS TIME

This resource has been produced by a senior member of the GCSE (9–1) English Literature examining team to offer teachers an insight into how the assessment objectives are applied. Here is an example of a response to the specimen question on the Conflict poetry cluster, to illustrate with commentary how a question in this section of the paper might be rewarded. Please note that this resource is provided for advice and guidance only and does not in any way constitute an indication of grade boundaries or endorsed answers. The sample assessment material for this answer and commentary can be found on the GCSE (9–1) English Literature web page and accessed via the following link: <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse-englishliterature-j352-from-2015/>



CONFLICT

2a) Carefully read *Anthem for Doomed Youth* by Wilfred Owen and *In Times of Peace* by John Agard. The first poem is from your poetry anthology and the second is an unseen poem.

How do both poems present the contrast between lives at war and lives at peace?

(NB The sample assessment materials include a slightly amended version of this question)

20 marks

CANDIDATE STYLE ANSWER

Conflict is present in both of these poems. 'Anthem for the Doomed Youth' talks about the needless slaughter of these boys. While 'In times of peace' it talks about the emotional conflict between feeling after the war.

They both – Wilfred Owen and John Agard – write about war. They use guns within their poem to help show their message. Owen writes "Monstrous anger of guns": 'Monstrous' suggests something alien like about the deaths the guns have produced. Making them sound alien like produces the thought that he believes they shouldn't exist. Wilfred suggest the guns are angry by finishing the line with: "anger of guns". This implies that even the guns believe war is wrong, helping the reader/listener believe more in his message. "That finger... so used to a trigger's warmth" Suggest that the soldier are so used to the guns they hold. This infers that how will they deal with the touch of their loved ones, adding to his message about the harsh realities of after war.

These poems do differ with their characteristics. 'In times of peace' the atmosphere is sedate and the language is friendly and romanticised: "warmth" and "wilting". The structure hasn't got a rhyming pattern, John is implying just like the poem: no one will know how things will go on and happen. Wilfred Owen suggest a horrific picture of war, he uses the atmosphere and language to add to his message. Language used such as "hasty Orisons" and "demonised" to conote an atmosphere of dread and hopelessness. By making the atmosphere hopeless Owen shows the reader/listener that these solidiers had no way out.

I prefer the 'Anthem for the Doomed Youth' as I find the Wilfred Owen puts his point across more successfully. I think using his language, structure, and atmosphere he has made his message easier to understand for the reader and listener, but also easier to remember. This is what Wilfred would have wanted, by distributing his message, he wanted more people to see the reality of what war was. This might have been his way to try and stop the war.

EXAMINER'S COMMENTARY

This is a relevant personal response which shows the candidate constructing a comparative argument in answer to the question. The opening paragraph shows understanding of the implied meaning that conflict in emotions can continue after the war, as well as appreciation of Owen's portrayal of the 'needless slaughter of these boys' (AO1).

The contrast between the ways in which both poets describe guns shows a comparative approach to different poets' methods and techniques (AO2). Owen's use of 'monstrous' and personification to describe the guns as alien and ill-intentioned is interestingly contrasted with Agard's concentration on the gun's 'warmth' and how uneasily this sits aside the warmth of human tenderness at home. There is some deeper understanding of the 'harsh realities' which Agard describes, especially how the soldiers will deal with the 'touch of their loved ones', although the candidate is clearly more comfortable writing about the prepared poem.

There is an interesting attempt to engage with Agard's choices of diction and form, and these are contrasted with Owen's (AO2), although a confident overview of the direction of either poem is lacking. While there is a strong understanding of how Owen communicates with his readers, there is less appreciation of the contrast between the home front and the front line,

either through Agard's implied narrative or the rituals of mourning which Owen describes.

The lively conclusion makes an evaluation which shows personal engagement (AO1) with Owen's poem and its rhetoric and shows how powerfully it still communicates to readers. However, for higher marks, we would expect more understanding of Agard's poem and more contrast between the emotions of those who have fought and those behind the lines.

More engagement with the second half of the unseen poem and with the implications of imagery, contrast and rhetoric might have been expected to show how the worlds of war and home differ. Both poets appeal to the reader's senses to help them to imagine the effects of war on feelings. Sound effects in both might also have received more attention, although this candidate is good on the warmth of the gun and some of what this might imply. There is enough careful, diligent and supported work to shows understanding at Band 4 level.

Understanding is not very developed but it is usually relevant and often supported by detail. There is some effective comment on language form and structure. Both poems are reasonably understood at a literal level and their impact is evaluated.



CANDIDATE STYLE ANSWER

I will be comparing two poems about war. Anthem for doomed youth by Wilfred Owen, and In times of peace by John Agard. These both represent war and what it was like.

Firstly, Owens poem shows that war was nothing; people were shot and nothing was done about it. Acting as if theres no pain or fear, 'die as cattle' This shows that men were getting slaughtered like cattle would at a slaughter house. This also shows that maybe no one cared, because it was their job. 'No prayers nor bells' This point proves that there was no pain in people towards the soldiers. No sign of thanks for them as they died.

In agreement Agards poem shows war as home and nothing was different. 'That finger-index to be exact – so used to a triggers warmth' This concludes that they always done the same thing, making the trigger warm. This could also mean that there was so much shooting that the gun gets hot. In comparison 'rapid rattle' in Owens poem shows that the noise was just a constant rattle of bullets. Also by saying they were rapid shows they are fast making the guns hot, or that that was all you could hear.

In conclusion, the idea and attitude are relatively similar, along with the tone and structure. They both show that war was herendous, however Agard uses a different structure to Owen.

EXAMINER'S COMMENTARY

This is not a very weak answer, but it shows threshold performance as the reading of both poems is very literal. There is a little understanding of how poems work, and a developed argument and appreciation of the implied meaning of Agard's poem are both lacking. While there is knowledge that Owen uses a 'structure', there is only limited engagement with his use of imagery or his implied contrast between the perceptions and reality of war.

After a straightforward introductory paragraph, some response is made to Owen's simile 'die as cattle'. There is supporting textual detail (AO1) and a little understanding of poetic language and poetic form (AO2). However, the implicit narrative 'that maybe no one cared because it was their job' is really the candidate's own idea, rather than Owen's.

The paragraph on Agard shows some understanding (AO1) that the poem expresses the problem of carrying the emotions of war into the world of peace – 'they always done the same thing' – although here it is the candidate's difficulties with written communication, also assessed in this paper, which prevent full development of an interpretation. There is the beginning of a comparative response to the ways in which both poets describe guns (AO2).

The concluding comment is, like the introduction, very general and does not directly address the question, showing the limitations of a response which does not construct a relevant argument. This is a straightforward response showing some understanding and relevant support, and meets all the criteria for Band 2.





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