

AS LEVEL

Examiners' report

ENGLISH LITERATURE

H072

For first teaching in 2015

H072/02 Summer 2024 series

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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Paper 2 series overview

The Drama and Poetry post-1900 component invites candidates to explore a set drama text as well as connections between a set prose text and an unseen prose passage. The component is designed to give candidates the opportunity to demonstrate the full breadth of their ability to fulfil the requirements of the range of the English Literature assessment objectives.

Success in this component is characterised by work that shows detailed knowledge of the set texts often demonstrated by attention to well selected textual detail (AO2) in support of clear and developed arguments (AO1). Writing is fluent and clear (AO1) and closely focused on the question, using relevant critical concepts and terminology. Understanding the influence of contexts (AO3) is shown through relevant references which are appropriate to the question posed and support the argument of the response. In Section 1 (Drama) successful responses demonstrate a strong sense of the set text as drama through detailed discussion of dramatic effects (AO2) or references to performances (AO5). There is a range of interpretations of the text in the light of the question (AO5) and the argument of the response. In Section 2 (Prose) the unseen extract is connected to the set text in a number of detailed and interesting ways which often serve to illuminate the set text itself (AO4).

The level of knowledge candidates showed about their set texts was comparable to previous series. It is not our impression that the disruption caused by Covid has meant that candidates are any less able to enjoy and appreciate literary texts like these.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> showed detailed knowledge of the text through apt selection of quotations or textual references to support their argument wrote clearly and with precision used references to different kinds of context (e.g. cultural, political, biographical) to support and develop the argument made full use of the extract in Section 2 to create links to the set text which helped to deepen analysis showed awareness of the play as a text for performance in Section 1 blended critical readings (and/or, in Section 1, references to different performance interpretations) into the argument to support and develop ideas showed confident use of critical concepts and vocabulary engaged enthusiastically with the text and the question. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> paid too little attention to the methods the writers used to present themes and to create effects in Section 2 reproduced material from other questions they had perhaps used in practice or preparation without sufficient focus on the specifics of the question actually set in the exam paid too little attention to opportunities offered by the extract in Section 2 to explore illuminating links spent too much time on considerations of context which were not germane to the question or the argument lacked clarity in written expression and/or in the construction of the argument demonstrated a general understanding of ideas concerned with the text, rather than showing a detailed, relevant appreciation of the text itself.

Section 1 overview

Continuing a trend observed over several years, the range of texts has continued to narrow and shift. *A Streetcar Named Desire* has become yet more popular among centres and candidates, with more responses in Section 1 being on this text. Among the less widely chosen texts in the Section, *The History Boys* has faded noticeably in popularity since 2023, while *Jerusalem* has enjoyed a modest surge. While many responses to *A Streetcar Named Desire* continue to confirm what a magnificent text it is for study at this level, it should be noted that the range of choice available on the list of potential set texts is, we believe, an important feature of the course design. All the available texts were chosen for their ability to excite and motivate both students and teachers by supplying unexpected and fresh literary experiences and insights.

The most successful responses invariably include a wide range of references to the texts under consideration in the light of the question asked. Critical readings and performance interpretations are also a key feature of the best work in Section 1, but always blended with skill and precision into the overall argument. Less successful responses sometimes contain an equal weight of such material, but deployed without significant attention to relevance, or as if relevance to the question is somehow self-evident.

It is also a feature of successful answers that references to contexts and different readings are embedded within the 'fabric' of the argument, with a resulting conciseness that can be very impressive indeed, not least in that it allows for the delivery of a wider range of ideas and observations within the limited time available.

Assessment for learning



In Section 1. Candidates who write about their drama text with a strong sense of its impact as drama tend to achieve well.

Question 1 (a)

1 Noel Coward: *Private Lives*

Either

(a) '*Private Lives* is an entertaining play without a moral.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of *Private Lives*?

[30]

No responses seen to this question.

Question 1 (b)

(b) 'Stylish, amusing, cruel.'

In the light of this comment, discuss the role of Amanda in *Private Lives*.

[30]

No responses seen to this question.

Question 2 (a)

2 Tennessee Williams: *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Either

(a) 'Throughout the play, we are aware of the pressure the past exerts on the present.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of *A Streetcar Named Desire*?

[30]

This was a popular choice of question, answered by roughly half of those who chose *A Streetcar Named Desire* as their text. It was clear that most candidates had considered issues relevant to the question in their engagement with the play, including cultural influences from their pasts that bear on the main characters and how they interact. Unsurprisingly, many answers focused on Blanche and the conflict between her and Stanley that lies at the heart of the play. His digging up of her past was seen as important, as his discoveries make it increasingly inevitable that Blanche will not be able to survive in the contemporary post-War world of New Orleans as embodied in Stanley himself.

'The past' tended to be taken in two ways – Blanche's past, and the cultural inheritance of the Deep South. These were, of course, persuasively interweaved in a great many responses. Some candidates chose to speculate more broadly about Stanley's wartime experiences but agreed that his pride in vaunting his status as an American provided a clear and angry defiance of Blanche's attempts to demean him.

Many productive references were made to the 1951 Kazan film version of the play, along with commentary on the play's main characters from Kazan himself. In several responses, Vivien Leigh's previous role in *Gone with the Wind* was appended to develop the notion of the 'Southern Belle' – a contextually significant phenomenon that, in less successful answers, tended to be named repetitively as if it were self-explanatory.

Many answers adopted a character-by character approach which often worked well, but ran the risk, in less successful responses, of dwindling into a purposeless exercise in prepared character study.

As in previous sessions, discussion of Williams' use of audio and visual techniques (e.g. the Polka tune, costuming colours and styles) was very productive, and bore witness to highly productive discussion of the dramatic qualities of the play as having been central to classroom engagement. A tendency in less successful answers towards generalisation and vagueness was sometimes betrayed in the unexplored deployment of technical terms such as 'plastic theatre' and cultural references such as 'the American Dream'.

Williams' personal struggles featured in a great many answers, although candidates need to be sure that such material is relevant to the question rather than included simply because it is of more general interest. As ever, the ability to blend and structure responses so that they engage thoughtfully and throughout with the task is always a sign of very successful work.

Question 2 (b)

(b) 'Blanche despises and ignores the day-to-day realities of life.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of the role of Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire*?

[30]

This popular question prompted many very good responses, and a few excellent ones. Many candidates chose to examine closely how Williams describes Blanche's first entrance – a potentially very productive approach, but one which led several less assured candidates towards a largely chronological approach thereafter.

Understandably, discussion often focused Blanche's drinking and bathing, which developed in many responses into a fruitful consideration of Williams' use of motifs and symbolism to present Blanche as a fantasist. There was interesting disagreement among candidates about the extent to which Blanche is responsible for her own destiny – whether her fantasies are a reflex response to trauma or a manipulative effort to get her own way (and all stations, as it were, in between).

It can have come as no surprise to most candidates that there was a question on Blanche. However, familiarity with the base material on which one might call to build a response is not necessarily the same as high success in that response. The terms of the question do matter and must not be overlooked in an effort to display the extent of what the candidate has prepared. Of course, engagement with such specifics also makes the whole exercise much more interesting; it breaks open the fascinating ambiguities of the play, to have to consider quite contentious notions inherent in key words such as 'despise' and 'ignore'. Even if it feels like a risk to have to spend a little time in re-considering and re-shaping what has been pre-learned, candidates who managed to get themselves to do so tended to produce more dynamic and thoughtful work.

Exemplar 1

2	b	<p>In 'the most imaginative and perceptive play he's ever written' (Brooke Atkinson), Williams explores the complexity of Blanche's character - the trauma of her past yet her conflicting attachment to the memory of a 'faded dream' force her to create an illusion to ignore the adapting society of New Orleans, the most diverse place in the South at in 1947. Yet arguably, her ignor willing ignorance is spurred by the the harsh brutality of the ^{the} path ^{reality} spanning her causing her to despise it and ignore it as a self-protective mechanism.</p> <p>for Blanche's past trauma for is the reason for her illusory perception of the world, where she does not face reality. She likens ^{her} the past love to a 'blinding light', and it is evident that she now lives her life in the ^{love} brief shadow of the brief yet explosive spark ^{spark}, as she constantly covers from light 'I cannot stand a naked lightbulb', putting a 'paper lantern' to cover the harsh intensity of her past. Yet the 'paper' and its weakness emphasises the fragility of her illusion and how and it will inevitably be destroyed as Mitch 'fears the paper lantern' and Stanley 'seizes the paper lantern.' The aggressive and masculine verbs 'fears', 'seizes' mirrors the feelings of victimisation and Blanche feels, indicating an inability to cope in a world where all its British flaws are exposed. Alcoholism is one such escape for Blanche as she furtively - 'carefully replaces the bottle'. Her secretive nature suggests her shame at her</p>
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Question Part

		<p>own mental distress and her internal demarcation of her own coping mechanisms. the deteriorating stand Williams' own far absent father was an alcoholic and his mother who came from gentility disapproved of such. By representing a mix between these two cultures and realities, Blanche is ultimately incompatible with either, and with her illusion has excluded herself of both social circles and realities. She despises both reality and her ways of coping with it. Her past trauma also manifests itself in her relationship with Stella -</p> <p>'You can get out', 'You've spit spilt something on your pretty white face collar.' By using direct address and a disapproving tone, Blanche attempts to position herself as a role of maternal care and create the illusion that Stella needs her. Indeed her infantile language 'spit' and dark dirty connotations of 'white' indicate a yearning for a time of the past when she didn't have to puttle with a worry about Stanley taking Stella from her. The 'white' almost emphasises Blanche's inferior of the 'Madonna-whore complex', ^{and even despising to same level} ringing Stella's to same extent for her own autonomy. She's aware her attempt is futile - from the start - 'You're all I've got in this world, and you're not glad to see me', so her attempt to retain Stella seems desperate in it's willing hopefulness that Stella for will not leave her. It However, she is aware from the start that this is a futile ^{more} ^{loves} at the time with and reality has separated herself from Allan and Stella.</p>
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This exemplar starts with an excellent opening paragraph. In just a dozen lines, it not only sets the response off at a brisk, dynamic pace, but also manages to present a kind of thesis that will be developed and examined over the full course of the answer. There is no sense at all the candidate keeping anything 'in reserve' - by the end of the paragraph, we already feel as if we are well into the argument, rather than having to wait for interesting ideas to emerge from a standard or generalised kind of opening.

The candidate's decision to launch the answer by quoting a critic feels bold and purposeful. The quotation itself does not, in fact, impact significantly on the specific arguments that the candidate will be presenting, but it does establish an immediate sense that this is someone whose understanding of the play has been augmented by an assimilation of different views.

Phrases used almost immediately to describe aspects of Blanche's mentality include 'conflicting attachment' and 'willing ignorance'. Again, nothing is being held back here; in important ways, this response has already taken the reader beyond where more pedestrian responses might reach over several pages. The sense, borne out by what follows, is of a candidate who is excited by the ideas brought to prominence by the few minutes spent thinking about the text in the new light of the question.

Notably, the candidate does not adopt a chronological approach to the question, beginning, as in many cases, with Williams' description of Blanche as she first enters. Of course, such an approach is seen in many instances to work very well – but only if it moves along quite quickly and without labouring the obvious points that are exemplified. In this response, the candidate has had the courage to understand their own priorities as the best guide to structuring the argument – rather than the order of the play's narrative.

In the much longer second paragraph, brief quotations from the text are frequent, and embedded into the flow of the writing. This is impressive, firstly as it indicates a detailed understanding of the text itself; the candidate is arguing not from recalled scraps of classroom notes or discussion, but from a firm personal understanding of what Williams wrote that has allowed a refinement of such ideas to take place. It seems highly likely that this candidate has given a great deal of thought to the play outside conventional teaching scenarios as well as inside them.

Abundant textual evidence is accompanied at times by closer analysis of chosen quotations. 'Tears the paper lantern' and 'seizes the paper lantern' are described as 'aggressive and masculine verbs', a straightforward observation that leads into the idea that Blanche often feels victimised by what is happening around her. In this way, the observed textual detail is brought back to into question relevance – it has become part of the overall argument, rather than simply driven by a recalled need to display AO2-related skills.

The candidate is also prepared to 'swim against the stream' by means of a closer examination of Blanche's relationship with herself, rather than settling for the quite conventional idea that she can be summarised as a misplaced relic of the old Deep South. The contention that 'her secretive nature suggests her shame at her own mental distress and her internal demonstration of her own coping mechanisms' is clearly the product of a mature and highly intelligent sensitivity. Perhaps this is the kind of insight that must be understood personally, rather than delivered as part of a teaching programme – an instance of a really capable and well-informed candidate thinking independently.

On the important matter of Blanche's relationship with her sister Stella, the candidate deploys not one but two quotations. One is quite direct in its import ('You can get out') while the other is more oblique, yet every bit as telling ('You've spilt something on your pretty white lace collar'). The detailed textual commentary that follows once again back into question relevance – the argument is not being allowed to 'drift'. Although this is by no means the end of the response, the paragraph does come to a kind of conclusion ('reality has separated her from those she loves, Allan and Stella') that picks up a key word from the question ('reality') and draws a line under that part of the argument. The candidate is aware of the need to produce 'well structured' work – a key aspect of the ever-significant AO1.

Question 3 (a)

3 Harold Pinter: *The Homecoming*

Either

- (a) 'Power games played in a domestic setting.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of *The Homecoming*?

[30]

No responses seen to this question.

Question 3 (b)

- (b) 'Teddy is not really one of the boys.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of the role of Teddy in *The Homecoming*?

[30]

No responses seen to this question.

Question 4 (a)

4 Alan Bennett: *The History Boys*

Either

- (a) 'It is never quite clear whether the boys gain or lose by the teaching they receive.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this comment on *The History Boys*?

[30]

The few responses seen to this question took a clear and balanced view of the question, and concluded that it was indeed ultimately unclear whether, overall, the boys had 'gained or lost'. By considering the play's ending as a starting point, several responses chose to begin by assessing the boys' own verdicts on their experiences and on the kind of adults they became. The influences of Hector, Mrs Lintott, Irwin and the Headmaster were all considered in responses, as seen across a range of student personalities and circumstances. It was again noted by some candidates how Hector's motorcycle misdemeanours have, since both the 1980s and the early 2000s (when the play was written, first performed and then adapted for the much-referenced film), come to be viewed differently, producing different verdicts on Hector's influence than what might previously have been envisaged. The Thatcherite climate as it was brought to bear on education was, once again, another important contextual consideration.

Question 4 (b)

(b) 'Hector is a born rebel, but a very unpredictable one.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of the role of Hector in *The History Boys*? [30]

A fascinating question, to which only a very few responses were seen. The improvised Belgian brothel scene was identified as exemplifying Hector's unpredictability, while Mrs Lintott's tired but affectionate attitude towards Hector was cited as evidence of a kind of ritualistic predictability to those who knew him best.

Question 5 (a)

5 Polly Stenham: *That Face*

Either

(a) '*That Face* shows your close relatives can be your worst enemies.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of *That Face*? [30]

No responses seen to this question.

Question 5 (b)

(b) 'Mia's brutal and irresponsible tendencies are unchecked by the other characters in the play.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of the role of Mia in *That Face*? [30]

No responses seen to this question.

Question 6 (a)

6 Jez Butterworth: *Jerusalem*

Either

(a) 'Fantasy matters more than fact in the world of this play.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of the play *Jerusalem*?

[30]

By some way more popular than Question 6 (b), answers to this question at all levels of achievement suggested a close engagement by candidates with this play and the issues it dramatises. Teachers are therefore to be congratulated, along with many of the candidates. There was much engagement with the notion of The Green World, and with a pre-Enlightenment world view that contextualises what we may habitually accept as normal and inevitable but was seen by most candidates as having been characterised in the play as brutal, tawdry and limited.

A view taken by some was that fantasy is presented as more attractive and engaging than 'fact', but that it also leads to a level of personal irresponsibility that is unacceptable. Dawn and Markey were seen to embody this moral absolute by several candidates, whose view of Rooster Byron was decisively coloured by his moments of feckless hesitancy in their encounter.

Question 6 (b)

(b) 'Rooster's male companions are a collection of losers.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of Rooster's male companions in *Jerusalem*?

[30]

Although less popular than Question 6 (a), responses to this question prompted some strong and obviously personal views, based in successful instances on close understanding of a range of characters. There was near unanimity, however, that the Professor cannot be categorised as 'a loser', even if the others, to greater or lesser extent, can. Considerations brought into play included how loyal (or otherwise) the males were prepared to remain to Rooster himself, especially in adversity; how easily they gave up on declared aims; how easily they compromised with the prevailing culture of, for example, the contemporary incarnation of Flintock Fair, and the forces of civil law and order as they muster towards the end of the play.

Section 2 overview

This Section offers candidates a single question on their prose set text choice, with a corresponding unseen prose extract chosen to provide opportunities to make connections with the set text. The most successful responses tended to use the unseen extract as a way of exploring characteristics and themes seen in the set text itself, rather than as a burdensome further requirement to what was essentially taken as a question on the set text alone. This does not at all necessarily mean that there should be an equal balance between discussion of the set text and analysis of the extract – many very successful answers spent more time on the set text than on the extract. However, nor should it feel as if the extract is being sidelined.

Less successful answers tended to tag on a connection at the end of a paragraph/section of discussion of the set text, and then, as the answer approached its close, to forget altogether about the unseen extract.

Of course, it was clear in some responses that candidates felt more confident discussing the set text than the extract; candidates should be reassured that examiners understand such hesitancy and are not looking for a 'perfect' response with which they 'agree'. It is recognised that, as there are many elements to questions in Section 2 (engaged familiarity with the set text, developed appreciation of different kinds of 'context', further analysis of some chosen textual examples, inter-textual comparison), it is unlikely in all but the very best responses that such a range of requirements can all be held in precise balance throughout.

In the most successful responses, there was an unmistakable sense of new discovery, now that the set text was placed in a new context (i.e. in comparison to another, unseen prose extract). Less successful responses tended to stick to what had been pre-learnt, and to wedge in material from the extract without having taken the time to weigh it up – a case of hope rather than due consideration. It is worth re-iterating that the longest answers are very often not the most successful. Candidates are not expected to say 'everything' that might be said: while a substantial answer is likely to be required for a high mark, responses are assessed on the merits of what has been included – there is no sense of penalty for ideas not mentioned in any response that meets the requirements for a high-Level mark.

In approaching the unseen prose extract, candidates should always take note of the introductory remarks that are intended to help them. The date of publication of the extract can also be helpful to note, although this is not always the case.

Candidates answered, in roughly equal proportions, Question 7 (*Great Gatsby/The Sleeper Wakes*), Question 8 (*The Bloody Chamber/Blue Bearded Lover*), or Question 9 (*Nineteen Eighty-Four/The Left Hand of Darkness*). No responses were seen to Questions 10 or 11 – suggesting a slight further narrowing of text choice uptake.

Assessment for learning



In Section 2, taking time to allow for a patient reading of the 'unseen' extract tends to produce clearer and more convincing comparisons.

Question 7

7 F Scott Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby*

Discuss ways in which Fitzgerald presents the fragility of relationships in *The Great Gatsby*.

In your answer you should make connections and comparisons with the unseen passage below, in which a relationship is tentatively re-started. [30]

Somewhat less popular than Questions 8 and 9, there were nevertheless several strong responses to this question. Many candidates pointed out how the fragility of the relationship in the extract is readily comparable to several relationships in Fitzgerald's novel. The focus was often on the 'romantic' relationships in *The Great Gatsby*, although several successful responses chose to examine Nick's relationships with Tom, Gatsby himself and, in a few cases, with the reader – an approach that allowed for productive discussion of Nick's unreliability as a narrator as a contrast to the extract's more stable narrative stance.

Many answers brought in the materialist decadence and pervasive amorality of the 'Roaring Twenties', some going on to suggest that this had weakened the resilience of Fitzgerald's characters, thereby affecting their capacity to care about other people without obsessing over them. Descriptive details in the extract such as 'dainty golden butterfly' and 'an austere glow of chilly gold' were picked up in many successful answers as very specific points of comparison with similarly intriguing visual imagery from Fitzgerald's novel.

Question 8

8 Angela Carter: *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*

Discuss ways in which Carter presents the authority of men over women.

In your answer you should select material from the whole text and make connections and comparisons with the unseen passage below which explores the balance of power in a relationship. [30]

Most response to his question provided examples of the authority of men over women in stories like *The Bloody Chamber* and, ever popular, *The Snow Child*, and then how this is reversed in a number of stories (e.g. *The Lady of the House of Love*, *The Company of Wolves*, the arrival of the mother at the end of *The Bloody Chamber*). Many candidates were able to begin establishing comparisons by identifying how *Blue Bearded Lover* derives from the same source as Carter's title story, and thereafter to trace in some detail similarities and differences between the two authors' treatments of the material.

It was good to note that very few candidates limited their discussion of Carter's collection to just one or two of the stories – an improvement on previous sessions. However, some responses attempted to bring in too many stories, resulting in a superficiality of commentary. There is no set rule on this matter, but the best responses tend to deal in detail with two or three stories, and more briefly with two or three more.

Question 9

9 George Orwell: *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Discuss ways in which Orwell explores the impact of physical suffering in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

In your answer you should make connections and comparisons with the unseen passage below which depicts a brutalizing event. [30]

Nineteen Eighty-Four was again a popular text choice for Section 2, and nearly all candidates displayed at least a competent narrative understanding of the novel. Nearly all answers referred to the historical contexts of Nazi Germany before and during World War 2, Stalinist Russia and its treatment of dissidence. Many also cited Orwell's experiences in Burma and Civil War Spain, and a few were able directly to quote his thoughts on totalitarianism more generally. It was not uncommon, however, for a sustained focus on such contextual material to take over completely from a due consideration of the text itself.

Many responses traced how, in Orwell's novel especially, physical suffering leads to the dehumanisation of the individual, and to a willing abandonment of any significant self-assertion or even sense of identity. In other words, how physical and psychological suffering go hand in hand, and are not portrayed as distinct from each other.

Most candidates clearly found the extract from *The Left Hand of Darkness* conducive and were often able to compare Le Guin's "Kundershaden" and Winston's treatment both once he finds himself in 'Room 101' and before then.

Successful readings of the extract often seemed to have made thoughtful use of intimidating details such as 'got me strapped on a pull-down table' and the use of 'veridical drugs', as they corresponded to Winston's torture in Room 101 and O'Brien's insistence on the truth, even when Winston no longer knows what he should think of as true. Physical and mental disorientation as described in the extract ('I did not know what day of the month it was'; 'I came only slowly to comprehend my surroundings') featured as further points of comparison with Orwell's novel, and often very effectively so. Winston's wretchedly degraded physical condition was often compared to the oppressive 'smell of excreta, vomit and sweat' to which Le Guin's narrator has become somehow accustomed.

Many responses focused on impact at the level of plot, while others, often more successfully in the end, chose a more thematic approach – by, for example, considering how both texts present the dehumanisation of the individual. There was rather less to be said about the style and/or narrative approach taken by Orwell and Le Guin, meaning that AO2 was sometimes rather neglected. The cold, matter-of-fact objectivity of Orwell's prose was, in some comparisons, held up against the deeper empathy encouraged by Le Guin's first-person narrative approach.

Exemplar 2

		Primarily, both Orwell and Guin use
		physical punishment in their texts to
		expose the fragility of rebellious drive.
		Winston Winston. At the climax of 1984,
		in order to avoid the "starving brutes"
		in the rat punishment, Winston declares
		"do it to Julia! not me! ... tear her face
		off strip her to the bones". The violent,
		visceral imagery here emphasises the
		extent of betrayal as Winston is willing
		to allow someone he once "loved"

to undertake such a brutal punishment in his place. This also highlights how his torture has undone the humanising evolution he had undergone as this cry parallels Winston's earlier desire to "ravish her [Julia] and ... cut her throat". In 'To shoot an Elephant' Orwell describes how a man "wears a mask and his face grows to fit it". In 1954, this ^{literal} mask ~~is~~ becomes a mirror as Winston becomes what he is most afraid of and ironically 'rats' Julia out. Similarly, the protagonist in the extract is "willing to answer what you ask" in order to avoid "intimidation". The adverb 'willing' insinuates that ^{the threat} physical punishment not only forces people to betray others but makes them eager to. During their punishment we can assume they fully complied as they only "came to myself again" after. The dissociative diction here highlights how physical punishment causes people to submit without guilt, regardless of the repercussions for others as they have an almost out of body experience. In a psychological context, according to Adorno's theory of obedience both ~~the~~ Guin's protagonist and Winston will have entered an agentic state allowing them to

comply to totalitarian regimes and betray others although this goes against their humanity. For Orwell this is to the extent that Winston becomes like a rat (as aforementioned). To convey the dystopian degradation of humanity under totalitarianism Orwell has Winston use the same language as the rats who would "strip a child to the bones". In Room 101 there is the "worst thing in the world"; this being both Winston's greatest fear and himself as he becomes as such. However, in Sandra Newman's modern adaptation of 1984, 'Julia', Julia bites the head of the rats perhaps suggesting loyalty is not completely susceptible to physical punishment and Winston is just weak.

However, Orwell ^{spotlights} ~~explores~~ how there can be resistance amidst the threat of physical punishment (one Guin's protagonist is lacking), perhaps emphasising the importance of resisting totalitarian pressure to readers. Even with the risk of "getting shot", Winston and Julia

		continue to engage in their love affair.
		Akin to the physical punishment of
		concentration camps used by Nazi Germany
		for undesirables, including supposed
		'sexual transgressors' (i.e. homosexuals),
		the ironically named "Ministry of Love"
		acts as the place of physical punishment
		Winston and Julia would be sent to if
		they got caught. Nevertheless, the couple

This exemplar, taken from a response to Question 9, demonstrates how to maintain a balance between the AO requirements in Section 2. To begin with, and then periodically throughout the response, comparisons between Orwell's novel and the given extract are brought explicitly to our attention, but this does not prevent the candidate from spending significant time focusing just on Orwell's novel, when more extended analysis is needed. The opening sentence ('Primarily both Orwell and Guin...' – the candidate has not fully picked up the name of the extract's author, but this is of no account in assessing the response) sets the tone by being direct and concise. There is much to address in a Section 2 task, and therefore little point in not aiming immediately for direct relevance.

As happens throughout the response, the candidate tends to use Orwell's own words to explain aspects of the novel's narrative. Rather than 'avoid the rats', we see 'avoid the 'starving brutes' in the rat punishment'. Any single instance of this carries a negligible effect, but the cumulative effect of frequent incidental references to the words of a text under scrutiny is convincing; the candidate understands not just the ideas in the novel but is arguing from a deep and personal appreciation of the novel itself.

Closer analysis of some textual references also helps to establish this sense. AO2 is part of the assessment of responses in this Section, and the unobtrusive claim that Orwell's language choices are 'violent and visceral' helps to keep this in mind. When the first point of comparison (AO4) is introduced ('Similarly, the protagonist in the extract is 'willing to answer what you ask') it is given a tight focus by the selection of Le Guin's word choices (in this case 'willing' and 'intimidation') for attention.

As the response progresses, the candidate brings in the historical context of the Nazi concentration camps before and during World War 2, as many candidates did. Again, however, this response does so in a deft and brisk way; 'Akin to the physical punishment of concentration camps used by Nazi Germany for undesirables...the ironically named 'Ministry of Love' acts as the place of physical punishment...'. AO3 is certainly an important consideration in assessing Section 2 responses, but it is best addressed in ways that are apposite and clearly relevant to the overall question – as here.

'Contexts' (AO3) are not limited to obvious historical and/or contextual factors that may have influenced the production or reception of a given text. In this response, 'Adorno's theory of Obedience' is referenced as a way to link Orwell's portrayal of Winston Smith to Le Guin's 'protagonist' as keen to comply, eventually or immediately, with the demands of their oppressors. While it is certainly not necessary for candidates to stray far from cultural and historical circumstances in addressing AO3, it can provide intriguing background to a discussion for candidates to bring in ideas from their wider experience and learning. Relevance to the task, and service to the overall argument are always key factors.

Question 10

10 Virginia Woolf: *Mrs Dalloway*

Discuss ways in which Woolf shows how the past lives on in the present in *Mrs Dalloway*.

In your answer you should make connections and comparisons with the unseen passage below in which Irma attempts to hide the feelings she has for Mike. [30]

No responses seen to this question.

Question 11

11 Mohsin Hamid: *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

Discuss ways in which Mohsin Hamid explores the impact of prejudice in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*.

In your answer you should make connections and comparisons with the unseen passage below from a novel depicting the experience of a black man who is repeatedly stopped by United States police. [30]

No responses seen to this question.

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