



GCE A LEVEL

A720U10-1



WEDNESDAY, 14 MAY 2025 – AFTERNOON

ENGLISH LITERATURE – A level component 1

Poetry

2 hours

A720U101
01

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

A WJEC pink 16-page answer booklet and clean copies (no annotation) of your set texts for this paper.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Use black ink or black ball-point pen.

Answer **one** question in Section A and **one** question in Section B.

Write your answers in the separate answer booklet provided, following the instructions on the front of the answer booklet.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

Both Section A and Section B carry 60 marks.

The number of marks is given in brackets at the end of each question or part-question.

You are advised to spend an hour on each section. In Section A, you are advised to spend approximately 20 minutes on part (i) and 40 minutes on part (ii).

You are reminded that assessment will take into account the quality of written communication used in your answers.

Section A: Poetry pre-1900 (open book)

Answer **one** question in this section.

You must have a clean copy (no annotation) of the set text which you have studied. Only the prescribed edition must be used.

Each question is in **two parts**. In both **part (i)** and **part (ii)** you are required to analyse how meanings are shaped.

In **part (ii)** you are **also** required to:

- demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received
- show how different interpretations have informed your reading.

Either,

Geoffrey Chaucer: *The Merchant's Prologue and Tale* (Cambridge)

- Re-read lines 976–999 from “‘I have,’ quod she, ‘a soule for to kepe...’” to “...and up he wente.” Examine Chaucer’s presentation of May in these lines. [20]
 - “As Chaucer presents them, we can neither admire nor sympathise with any of the characters.” With close reference to relevant contexts, examine this view of *The Merchant's Prologue and Tale*. [40]

Or,

John Donne: *Selected Poems* (Penguin Classics)

- Re-read ‘Holy Sonnet VI’ on pages 179–180. Examine Donne’s use of imagery in this poem. [20]
 - Donne’s poetry has been described as “intensely physical”. With close reference to relevant contexts, explore this view of Donne’s poetry. [40]

Or,

John Milton: *Paradise Lost Book IX* (Oxford)

- Re-read lines 758–779 from “In plain then...” to “...both body and mind?” Examine Milton’s presentation of Eve in these lines. [20]
 - “As Milton presents it, the desire for more is inspired by the devil.” In the light of this comment, and with close reference to relevant contexts, examine Milton’s presentation of ambition in *Paradise Lost Book IX*. [40]

Or,

William Blake: *Poems selected by Patti Smith* (Vintage)

4. (i) Re-read 'The Divine Image' on page 90. Examine Blake's use of poetic techniques in this poem. [20]
- (ii) How far do you agree with the view that "while the imagery and subject matter are of their time, the poems still speak powerfully to us"? In the course of your writing, you must make close reference to relevant contexts. [40]

Or,

Christina Rossetti: *Selected Poems* (Penguin Classics)

5. (i) Re-read 'De Profundis' on page 153. Examine the ways in which Rossetti presents intense feelings in this poem. [20]
- (ii) How far would you agree with the view that "Rossetti's poetry has little appeal to a non-religious reader"? In the course of your writing, you must make close reference to relevant contexts. [40]

Section B: Poetry post-1900 (open book)

Answer **one** question in this section.

You must have a clean copy (no annotation) of the set texts which you have studied. Only the prescribed editions must be used.

Where prescribed sections of the texts are indicated in brackets, **only poems from these sections** can be included in your response.

In your response you are required to:

- analyse how meanings are shaped
- demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received
- explore connections across the set texts
- show how different interpretations have informed your reading.

Thomas Hardy: *Poems selected by Tom Paulin (Faber)*
(*Poems of the Past and Present, Poems of 1912–13, Moments of Vision*)

T. S. Eliot: *Selected Poems (Faber)*
(*Prufrock and Other Observations, The Waste Land, The Hollow Men, Ariel Poems*)

Either,

6. “We are fascinated by their ideas but rarely comforted by their poetry.” In the light of this view, and with close reference to relevant contexts, examine connections between the ways in which Hardy’s and Eliot’s poetry affects the reader. You must analyse in detail **at least two** poems from **each** of your texts. [60]

Or,

7. Both poets have been accused of “...a kind of self-obsession which stands in the way of compassion for their fellow man”. In the light of this view, and with close reference to relevant contexts, explore connections between the ways in which Hardy and Eliot present their human subjects. You must analyse in detail **at least two** poems from **each** of your texts. [60]

W.B. Yeats: *Poems Selected by Seamus Heaney* (Faber)

(In the Seven Woods, The Green Helmet and Other Poems, Responsibilities, The Wild Swans at Coole, Michael Robartes and the Dancer, The Tower)

Dannie Abse: *Welsh Retrospective* (Seren)

Either,

8. “They are first and foremost story-tellers.” In the light of this comment, what connections have you found between the ways in which Yeats’ and Abse’s poetry appeals to readers? In the course of your writing, you must make close reference to relevant contexts and analyse in detail **at least two** poems from **each** of your texts. [60]

Or,

9. “In both collections of poetry we witness exuberant celebrations of love in its many different forms.” In the light of this comment, and with close reference to relevant contexts, explore connections between the ways in which Yeats and Abse write about love. You must analyse in detail **at least two** poems from **each** of your texts. [60]

Ted Hughes: *Poems selected by Simon Armitage* (Faber)

(Prescribed section: all poems up to and including ‘Rain’ on pages 68–69)

Sylvia Plath: *Poems selected by Ted Hughes* (Faber)

Either,

10. “Death is presented with a sense of fascination rather than fear or dread.” In the light of this comment, and with close reference to relevant contexts, examine connections between the ways in which Hughes and Plath write about death. You must analyse in detail **at least two** poems from **each** of your texts. [60]

Or,

11. “In both poets’ writing, landscapes are presented as having special power and significance.” In the light of this comment, and with close reference to relevant contexts, examine connections between the ways in which Hughes and Plath make use of landscapes. You must analyse in detail **at least two** poems from **each** of your texts. [60]

Philip Larkin: *The Whitsun Weddings* (Faber)

Carol Ann Duffy: *Mean Time* (Picador)

Either,

- 12.** “Effective poems often have the power to capture a range of contradictory emotions.” In the light of this comment, and with close reference to relevant contexts, explore connections between the ways in which Larkin and Duffy present complex feelings. You must analyse in detail **at least two** poems from **each** of your texts. [60]

Or,

- 13.** “In the seemingly minor details of domestic life, both poets discover profound truths.” In the light of this comment, and with reference to relevant contexts, explore connections between the ways in which Larkin and Duffy make use of apparently insignificant material. You must analyse in detail **at least two** poems from **each** of your texts. [60]

Seamus Heaney: *Field Work* (Faber)

Owen Sheers: *Skirrid Hill* (Seren)

Either,

- 14.** “Both poets demonstrate an intense awareness of the physical world.” In the light of this view, and with reference to relevant contexts, explore connections between the ways in which Heaney and Sheers present the material world. You must analyse in detail **at least two** poems from **each** of your texts. [60]

Or,

- 15.** “The poets are emotionally engaged but the poems are somehow completely unsentimental.” In drawing connections between the ways in which Heaney and Sheers present emotions, show how far you agree with this view. In the course of your writing, you must make close reference to relevant contexts. You must analyse in detail **at least two** poems from **each** of your texts. [60]

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