



GCE A LEVEL

1720U30-1



S25-1720U30-1

WEDNESDAY, 11 JUNE 2025 – MORNING

ENGLISH LITERATURE – A2 unit 3
Poetry Pre-1900 and Unseen Poetry

2 hours

1720U301
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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.

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 poetry 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.

Either,

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

1. (i) Re-read lines 55–80 from “And certainly, ... ” to “ ... til he sterve.” How does Chaucer present the role of a wife in these lines? [15]
- (ii) With close reference to relevant contexts, examine Chaucer’s presentation of power in *The Merchant's Prologue and Tale*. [45]

Or,

John Donne: *Selected Poems* (Penguin Classics)

2. (i) Re-read ‘The Anniversary’ on page 17. How does Donne present the lovers’ relationship in this poem? [15]
- (ii) With close reference to relevant contexts, consider some of the ways in which Donne presents time and its effects. [45]

Or,

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

3. (i) Re-read lines 404–433 from “O much deceived ... ” to “ ... and storm so nigh.” How does Milton create mood and atmosphere in these lines? [15]
- (ii) With close reference to relevant contexts, consider some of the ways in which Milton presents conflict in *Paradise Lost Book IX*. [45]

Or,

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

4. (i) Re-read 'Holy Thursday' from *Songs of Innocence* on page 91. How does Blake make use of imagery in this poem? [15]
- (ii) With close reference to relevant contexts, consider some of the ways in which Blake presents the lives of children? [45]

Or,

Christina Rossetti: *Selected Poems* (Penguin Classics)

5. (i) Re-read 'An Apple-Gathering' on pages 53–54. How does Rossetti present the speaker's situation in this poem? [15]
- (ii) With close reference to relevant contexts, consider some of the ways in which Rossetti presents the experiences of women. [45]

Section B: Unseen Poetry

Answer Question 6.

In your response, you are required to:

- analyse how meanings are shaped
 - explore connections across poems.
6. Compare the presentation of sleep in Poem A: 'Insomnia' by Amos Russel Wells and in **one** other poem from the list below:

Poem B: 'Variations on the Word Sleep' by Margaret Atwood

Poem C: 'Lullaby' by Joanne Limburg

Poem D: 'Asleep' by Wilfred Owen.

[60]

Poem A: 'Insomnia' by Amos Russel Wells

My soul is shipwrecked in the night
Upon a black and vacant shore;
A flood of murky air before,
Of surging air to left and right.

The waves roll in, the waves roll in,
And each a sombre spectre bears,
The writhing forms of many cares,
The coiling forms of many a sin;

Neglected tasks that frown austere,
Glimpses of old friends angry, gleams
Of dead delights and drifting dreams
And gibbering ghosts of empty fear

Out on the flood, the faces pale
Of drowning hopes, so fair, so fair;
Or, tossing here and floating there,
The tattered rags of fortune's sail;

And, wrenched from out that midnight grave,
The white corpse of a passion sweet,
Rolled by the darkness to my feet,
And then snatched back into the wave.

My eyes are straining through the deep,
This surging night that has no end;
Make haste, O pitying Christ, and send
Thy blessed rescue bark¹ of sleep!

The ship came not but, in its stead
Its Master stood upon the shore;
And lo! the waves were black no more;
And lo! a gleam from overhead.

bark¹: a small sailing vessel.

He touched my hot and throbbing eyes,
 The Master, with His loving hand,
 And softly on that midnight strand
 There grew the light of paradise.

Those hateful forms of sin and care
 Flung at me by that ghostly sea,—
 I know not if they ceased to be,—
 I saw them not, for Christ was there.

Still sleepless stretched the night away,
 But joyfully, for Christ and I
 Together read the opening sky,
 And watched the dawning of the day.

Poem B: 'Variations on the Word Sleep' by Margaret Atwood

I would like to watch you sleeping,
 which may not happen.
 I would like to watch you,
 sleeping. I would like to sleep
 with you, to enter
 your sleep as its smooth dark wave
 slides over my head
 and walk with you through that lucent
 wavering forest of bluegreen leaves
 with its watery sun & three moons
 towards the cave where you must descend,
 towards your worst fear

I would like to give you the silver
 branch, the small white flower, the one
 word that will protect you
 from the grief at the center
 of your dream, from the grief
 at the center. I would like to follow
 you up the long stairway
 again & become
 the boat that would row you back
 carefully, a flame
 in two cupped hands
 to where your body lies
 beside me, and you enter
 it as easily as breathing in

I would like to be the air
 that inhabits you for a moment
 only. I would like to be that unnoticed
 & that necessary.

Poem C: 'Lullaby' by Joanne Limburg

You drop a toy and rub your eyes.
Sleep is circling in the shadows.

Shake your head from side to side.
Baby, sleep has caught your scent.

Struggle in your mother's arms.
Sleep is creeping on its belly.

Sing your wailing protest song.
Baby, sleep is sinking down.

But your mother's song is soothing.
Sleep is swaying on its haunches.

Slowly now your lids slide shut.
Baby, sleep is set to pounce.

Last cries fade into her shoulder.
Sleep is dragging you to nowhere.

Mother's offered you up again.
Baby, sleep will claim its own.

Poem D: 'Asleep' by Wilfred Owen

Under his helmet, up against his pack,
After so many days of work and waking,
Sleep took him by the brow and laid him back.

There, in the happy no-time of his sleeping,
Death took him by the heart. There heaved a quaking
Of the aborted life within him leaping,
Then chest and sleepy arms once more fell slack.

And soon the slow, stray blood came creeping
From the intruding lead, like ants on track.

Whether his deeper sleep lie shaded by the shaking
Of great wings, and the thoughts that hung the stars,
High-pillowed on calm pillows of God's making,
Above these clouds, these rains, these sleets of lead,
And these winds' scimitars²,
—Or whether yet his thin and sodden head
Confuses more and more with the low mould,
His hair being one with the grey grass
Of finished fields, and wire-scraggs rusty-old,
Who knows? Who hopes? Who troubles? Let it pass!
He sleeps. He sleeps less tremulous, less cold,
Than we who wake, and waking say Alas!

²scimitars: swords.

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