



GCE AS/A LEVEL

2720U10-1



S25-2720U10-1

THURSDAY, 15 MAY 2025 – MORNING

ENGLISH LITERATURE – AS unit 1
Prose and Drama

2 hours

2720U101
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ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

A WJEC pink 16-page answer booklet.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Use black ink or black ball-point pen. Do not use gel pen or correction fluid.

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.

Use both sides of the paper. Write only within the white areas of the booklet.

Write the question number in the two boxes in the left-hand margin at the start of each answer, for example

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Leave at least two line spaces between each answer.

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 one hour on each section. In Section A you are advised to spend 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: Prose fiction pre-1900

Answer **one** question in this section.

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,

Jane Austen: *Sense and Sensibility* (Penguin Classics)

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Read the extract below and answer the questions which follow.

His son was sent for, as soon as his danger was known, and to him Mr. Dashwood recommended, with all the strength and urgency which illness could command, the interest of his mother-in-law and sisters.

Mr. John Dashwood had not the strong feelings of the rest of the family; but he was affected by a recommendation of such a nature at such a time, and he promised to do every thing in his power to make them comfortable. His father was rendered easy by such an assurance, and Mr. John Dashwood had then leisure to consider how much there might prudently be in his power to do for them.

He was not an ill-disposed young man, unless to be rather cold hearted, and rather selfish, is to be ill-disposed: but he was, in general, well respected; for he conducted himself with propriety in the discharge of his ordinary duties. Had he married a more amiable woman, he might have been made still more respectable than he was:—he might even have been made amiable himself; for he was very young when he married, and very fond of his wife. But Mrs. John Dashwood [*Fanny*] was a strong caricature of himself;—more narrow-minded and selfish.

When he gave his promise to his father, he meditated within himself to increase the fortunes of his sisters by the present of a thousand pounds a-piece. He then really thought himself equal to it. The prospect of four thousand a year, in addition to his present income, besides the remaining half of his own mother's fortune, warmed his heart, and made him feel capable of generosity.—“Yes, he would give them three thousand pounds: it would be liberal and handsome! It would be enough to make them completely easy. Three thousand pounds! he could spare so considerable a sum with little inconvenience.”—He thought of it all day long, and for many days successively, and he did not repent.

No sooner was his father's funeral over, than Mrs. John Dashwood, without sending any notice of her intention to her mother-in-law, arrived with her child and their attendants. No one could dispute her right to come; the house was her husband's from the moment of his father's decease; but the indelicacy of her conduct was so much the greater. [*omitted text*] Mrs. John Dashwood had never been a favourite with any of her husband's family; but she had had no opportunity, till the present, of showing them with how little attention to the comfort of other people she could act when occasion required it.

So acutely did Mrs. Dashwood feel this ungracious behaviour, and so earnestly did she despise her daughter-in-law for it, that, on the arrival of the latter, she would have quitted the house for ever, had not the entreaty of her eldest girl induced her first to reflect on the propriety of going, and her own tender love for all her three children determined her afterwards to stay, and for their sakes avoid a breach with their brother.

- How are Mr. John Dashwood and Mrs. John Dashwood [*Fanny*] presented in this extract? [20]
- To what extent do you agree with the view that “in *Sense and Sensibility*, promises are always broken”? In your response, you must give close consideration to **at least two** other parts of the novel and to relevant contexts. [40]

Or,

Charlotte Brontë: *Jane Eyre* (Penguin Classics)

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Read the extract below and answer the questions which follow.

‘Oh, Adèle will go to school – I have settled that already; nor do I mean to torment you with the hideous associations and recollections of Thornfield Hall – this accursed place – this tent of Achan – this insolent vault, offering the ghastliness of living death to the light of the open sky – this narrow stone hell, with its one real fiend, worse than a legion of such as we imagine. Jane, you shall not stay here, nor will I. I was wrong ever to bring you to Thornfield Hall, knowing as I did how it was haunted. I charged them to conceal from you, before I ever saw you, all knowledge of the curse of the place; merely because I feared Adèle never would have a governess to stay if she knew with what inmate she was housed, and my plans would not permit me to remove the maniac elsewhere – though I possess an old house, Ferndean Manor, even more retired and hidden than this, where I could have lodged her safely enough, had not a scruple about the unhealthiness of the situation, in the heart of a wood, made my conscience recoil from the arrangement. Probably those damp walls would soon have eased me of her charge: but to each villain his own vice; and mine is not a tendency to indirect assassination, even of what I most hate.

‘Concealing the madwoman’s neighbourhood from you, however, was something like covering a child with a cloak, and laying it down near a upas-tree: that demon’s vicinage is poisoned, and always was. But I’ll shut up Thornfield Hall: I’ll nail up the front door and board the lower windows: I’ll give Mrs. Poole two hundred a year to live here with *my wife*, as you term that fearful hag: Grace will do much for money, and she shall have her son, the keeper at Grimsby Retreat, to bear her company and be at hand to give her aid in the paroxysms, when *my wife* is prompted by her familiar to burn people in their beds at night, to stab them, to bite their flesh from their bones, and so on —’

‘Sir,’ I interrupted him, ‘you are inexorable for that unfortunate lady: you speak of her with hate – with vindictive antipathy. It is cruel – she cannot help being mad.’

‘Jane, my little darling (so I will call you, for so you are), you don’t know what you are talking about; you misjudge me again: it is not because she is mad I hate her. If you were mad, do you think I should hate you?’

‘I do indeed, sir.’

‘Then you are mistaken, and you know nothing about me, and nothing about the sort of love of which I am capable. Every atom of your flesh is as dear to me as my own: in pain and sickness it would still be dear. Your mind is my treasure, and if it were broken, it would be my treasure still.’

- i) How is Mr Rochester presented in this extract? [20]
- ii) Discuss the view that “in *Jane Eyre*, Brontë presents a society completely lacking in kindness”. In your response, you must give close consideration to **at least two** other parts of the novel and to relevant contexts. [40]

Or,

Elizabeth Gaskell: *North and South* (Penguin Classics)

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Read the extract below and answer the questions which follow.

‘Don’t go on, mamma. I can understand it all,’ said Margaret, leaning up caressingly against her mother’s side, and kissing her hand.

‘No, you can’t Margaret. No one can who did not see him then. I could hardly lift myself up to go and meet him – everything seemed so to reel around me all at once. And when I got to him, he did not speak, or seem surprised to see me there, more than three miles from home, beside the Oldham beech-tree; but he put my arm in his, and kept stroking my hand, as if he wanted to soothe me to be very quiet under some great heavy blow; and when I trembled so all over that I could not speak, he took me in his arms, and stooped down his head on mine, and began to shake and to cry in a strange muffled, groaning voice, till I, for very fright, stood quite still, and only begged him to tell me what he had heard. And then, with his hand jerking, as if some one else moved it against his will, he gave me a wicked newspaper to read, calling our Frederick a “traitor of the blackest dye,” “a base, ungrateful disgrace to his profession.” Oh! I cannot tell what bad words they did not use. I took the paper in my hands as soon as I had read it – I tore it up to little bits – I tore it – Oh! I believe, Margaret, I tore it with my teeth. I did not cry. I could not. My cheeks were as hot as fire, and my very eyes burnt in my head. I saw your father looking grave at me. I said it was a lie, and so it was. Months after, this letter came, and you see what provocation Frederick had. It was not for himself, or his own injuries, he rebelled; but he would speak his mind to Captain Reid, and so it went on from bad to worse; and you see, most of the sailors stuck by Frederick.

‘I think, Margaret,’ she continued, after a pause, in a weak, trembling, exhausted voice, ‘I am glad of it – I am prouder of Frederick standing up against injustice, than if he had been simply a good officer.’

‘I am sure I am,’ said Margaret, in a firm, decided tone. ‘Loyalty and obedience to wisdom and justice are fine; but it is still finer to defy arbitrary power, unjustly and cruelly used – not on behalf of ourselves, but on behalf of others more helpless.’

‘For all that, I wish I could see Frederick once more – just once. He was my first baby, Margaret.’ Mrs. Hale spoke wistfully, and almost as if apologizing for the yearning, craving wish, as though it were a depreciation of her remaining child. But such an idea never crossed Margaret’s mind. She was thinking how her mother’s desire could be fulfilled.

‘It is six or seven years ago – would they still prosecute him, mother? If he came and stood his trial, what would be the punishment? Surely, he might bring evidence of his great provocation.’

‘It would do no good,’ replied Mrs Hale.

- i) How is Mrs Hale presented in this extract? [20]
- ii) How far do you agree with the view that “*North and South* is primarily a novel of rebellion and discontent”? In your response, you must give close consideration to **at least two** other parts of the novel and to relevant contexts. [40]

Or,

Charles Dickens: *David Copperfield* (Penguin Classics)

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Read the extract below and answer the questions which follow.

At the pawnbroker's shop, too, I began to be very well known. The principal gentleman who officiated behind the counter, took a good deal of notice of me; and often got me, I recollect, to decline a Latin noun or adjective, or to conjugate a Latin verb, in his ear, while he transacted my business. After all these occasions Mrs Micawber made a little treat, which was generally a supper; and there was a peculiar relish in these meals which I well remember.

At last Mr Micawber's difficulties came to a crisis, and he was arrested early one morning, and carried over to the King's Bench Prison in the Borough. He told me, as he went out of the house, that the God of day had now gone down upon him – and I really thought his heart was broken and mine too. But I heard, afterwards, that he was seen to play a lively game at skittles, before noon.

On the first Sunday after he was taken there, I was to go and see him, and have dinner with him. I was to ask my way to such a place, and just short of that place I should see such another place, and just short of that I should see a yard, which I was to cross, and keep straight on until I saw a turnkey. All this I did; and when at last I did see a turnkey (poor little fellow that I was!), and thought how, when Roderick Random was in a debtors' prison, there was a man there with nothing on him but an old rug, the turnkey swam before my dimmed eyes and my beating heart.

Mr Micawber was waiting for me within the gate, and we went up to his room (top story but one), and cried very much. He solemnly conjured me, I remember, to take warning by his fate; and to observe that if a man had twenty pounds a-year for his income, and spent nineteen pounds nineteen shillings and sixpence, he would be happy, but that if he spent twenty pounds one he would be miserable. After which he borrowed a shilling of me for porter, gave me a written order on Mrs Micawber for the amount, and put away his pocket-handkerchief, and cheered up.

We sat before a little fire, with two bricks put within the rusted grate, one on each side, to prevent its burning too many coals; until another debtor, who shared the room with Mr Micawber, came in from the bakehouse with the loin of mutton which was our joint-stock repast. Then I was sent up to 'Captain Hopkins' in the room overhead, with Mr Micawber's compliments, and I was his young friend, and would Captain Hopkins lend me a knife and fork [*omitted text*].

There was something gipsy-like and agreeable in the dinner, after all. I took back Captain Hopkins's knife and fork early in the afternoon, and went home to comfort Mrs Micawber with an account of my visit. She fainted when she saw me return, and made a little jug of egg-hot afterwards to console us while we talked it over.

- i) How is Mr Micawber presented in this extract? [20]
- ii) "In *David Copperfield*, Dickens presents a society dominated by weak and selfish characters." To what extent do you agree with this view of *David Copperfield*? In your response, you must give close consideration to **at least two** other parts of the novel and to relevant contexts. [40]

Or,

Thomas Hardy: *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (Penguin Classics)

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Read the extract below and answer the questions which follow.

When they had emerged upon the open road and parted they found enough to do in holding their bowed umbrellas to the wind. Nevertheless, the lady looked in at the cornyard gates as she passed them, and paused on one foot for a moment. But nothing was visible there save the ricks, and the hump-backed barn, cushioned with moss, and the granary, rising against the church tower behind, where the smacking of the rope against the flag-staff still went on.

Now Henchard had not the slightest suspicion that Elizabeth-Jane's movement was to be so prompt. Hence when, just before six, he reached home and saw a fly at the door from the Golden Crown, and his stepdaughter, with all her little bags and boxes, getting into it, he was taken by surprise.

"But you said I might go, father?" she explained, through the carriage window.

"Said! – yes. But I thought you meant next month, or next year. 'Od, seize it – you take time by the forelock! This, then, is how you be going to treat me for all my trouble about ye?"

"Oh, father, how can you speak like that? It is unjust of you!" she said with spirit.

"Well, well, have your own way," he replied. He entered the house, and, seeing that all her things had not yet been brought down, went up to her room to look on. He had never been there since she had occupied it. Evidences of her care, of her endeavours for improvement, were visible all around, in the form of books, sketches, maps, and little arrangements for tasteful effects. Henchard had known nothing of these efforts. He gazed at them, turned suddenly about, and came down to the door.

"Look here," he said, in an altered voice – he never called her by name now – "don't 'ee go away from me. It may be I've spoke roughly to you – but I've been grieved beyond everything by you – there's something that caused it."

"By me?" she said, with deep concern. "What have I done?"

"I can't tell you now. But if you'll stop, and go on living as my daughter, I'll tell you all in time."

But the proposal had come ten minutes too late. She was in the fly – was already, in imagination, at the house of the lady whose manner had such charms for her. "Father," she said, as considerately as she could, "I think it best for us that I go on now. I need not stay long; I shall not be far away; and if you want me badly I can soon come back again."

He nodded ever so slightly, as a receipt of her decision, and no more. "You are not going far, you say. What will be your address, in case I wish to write to you? Or am I not to know?"

"Oh yes – certainly. It is only in the town – High Street Hall."

"Where?" said Henchard, his face stilling.

She repeated the words. He neither moved nor spoke, and waving her hand to him in utmost friendliness, she signified to the flyman to drive up the street.

- i) Examine the presentation of Elizabeth-Jane and Henchard in this extract. [20]
- ii) Consider the view that "*The Mayor of Casterbridge* is primarily a novel about rejection". In your response, you must give close consideration to **at least two** other parts of the novel and to relevant contexts. [40]

Section B: Drama

Answer **one** question in this section.

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
- show how different interpretations have informed your reading.

Christopher Marlowe: *Doctor Faustus* (Longman)

Either,

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“Faustus is a character with whom audiences are unable to sympathise.” Discuss this view of *Doctor Faustus*. In your response, you must refer to relevant contexts. [60]

Or,

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Discuss the view that “in *Doctor Faustus*, all the problems of the play stem from learning”. In your response, you must refer to relevant contexts. [60]

Oscar Wilde: *Lady Windermere’s Fan* (New Mermaids)

Or,

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Consider the view that “in *Lady Windermere’s Fan*, Wilde presents a society where family bonds are fragile”. In your response, you must refer to relevant contexts. [60]

Or,

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How far would you agree with the view that “in *Lady Windermere’s Fan*, Wilde is primarily concerned with challenging the rigid gender roles of London Society”? In your response, you must refer to relevant contexts. [60]

Tennessee Williams: *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Penguin)

Or,

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Discuss the view that “*A Streetcar Named Desire* is a play without love”. In your response, you must refer to relevant contexts. [60]

Or,

1	1
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To what extent do you agree with the view that “in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Mitch is a character who contributes very little to the dramatic impact of the play”? In your response, you must refer to relevant contexts. [60]

Caryl Churchill: *Top Girls* (Methuen)**Or,**

1	2
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"In *Top Girls*, Churchill presents the working-class women as powerless." Consider this view of the play. In your response, you must refer to relevant contexts. [60]

Or,

1	3
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How far would you agree that "*Top Girls* is a play dominated by resentful characters"? In your response, you must refer to relevant contexts. [60]

Brian Friel: *Translations* (Faber)**Or,**

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Consider the view that "in *Translations*, Friel presents a play that is primarily shaped by heartbreak". In your response, you must refer to relevant contexts. [60]

Or,

1	5
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How far would you agree with the view that "*Translations* is a play which celebrates differences"? In your response, you must refer to relevant contexts. [60]

END OF PAPER