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Examiners' report

ENGLISH LITERATURE

H472
For first teaching in 2015

H472/01 Summer 2019 series

Version 1

Contents

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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. 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 can be downloaded from OCR.

Paper 1 series overview

H472/01 (Drama and Poetry pre-1900) is one of the three components which make up OCR's A Level in English Literature. The examination requires candidates to write about a Shakespeare play of their choice (from a set list of six texts) firstly commenting on a 'context' passage and secondly responding to an essay question. In the second half of the examination, candidates choose one of six questions and write an essay comparing two texts (one drama and one poetry) from a selection of ten works – in all – written before 1900. This is a closed text examination.

Candidates are likely to perform well on the paper if they keep in mind the dominant assessment objective for each part: AO2 [linguistic analysis] in Section 1(a); AO5 [different interpretations] in Section 2(b); AO3 [the significance and influence of contexts] in Section 2. They will also succeed if they bear in mind the importance of coherent, accurate expression (AO1 – which applies in all three parts of the paper).

This seemed to be another very good series for the component. Perhaps this is no longer considered to be the 'new' specification – and there are clear signs that candidates and teachers continue to refine their approach to the component admirably. It is good too that candidates seem to bear in mind the advice provided by OCR in feedback documents (such as this one) and continue to adapt their approach to answering questions effectively. Many candidates now seem to use the time available in the examination wisely. There is often a clear sense of candidates using time to 'think, read, plan and check' their work rather than simply to write as much as they possibly can in the time available. This is a fairly long examination, but we do not expect candidates to cover 15 or 20 pages in the answer booklets (which is still sometimes the case). Some examiners do continue to comment on some candidates' poor use of the time in the examination. It is worth reminding candidates that they are in charge of the time available to them and they should divide this up appropriately when writing their three separate essays. Quite a few answers this year were incomplete.

It was good to note in this series that many candidates seemed able to respond flexibly and imaginatively to the demands of the questions set. There is, of course, a great deal that candidates and teachers can to do to prepare for the examination in advance – but there is a danger in approaching, for example, the Shakespeare 'context' questions with the view that certain passages "will come up" and that others are "unlikely to". Similarly, candidates are likely to plan for specific, popular topics to be the focus of the Shakespeare essay question and the Section 2 comparative questions – but it is also profitable to make sure that broader skills have been developed during the course of study so that these can then be applied (flexibly) to any questions which might be set.

Candidates should be reminded that answering the question set is an important determining factor for the success of an answer and one of the key matters examiners keep in mind when judging the quality of a script. Once again it was noted at times during this series that some candidates took the opportunity to 'twist' a question away from its desired focus towards a topic which the candidate had been hoping to consider during the examination. This was not always a satisfactory approach.

Candidates should be reminded of the importance of accuracy and presentation of work. Examiners try very hard to decipher all handwriting, but this is an increasing challenge. It is also worth reminding the increasing number of candidates who submit their answers in word processed format of the same, and – with the requirements of AO1 in mind – eliminate errors of expression wherever possible (especially when these are 'typos' or the result of carelessness).

Once again, this series it was encouraging and rewarding to note that a new generation of students continues to engage positively with English Literature. A large number of effective, imaginative and inspirational responses were seen. The great, historic texts in this component often come alive in the hands of a contemporary generation of readers and critics who respond to them in a way which both takes into the account the weight of the literary past and also incorporates current trends and personal insights. Often a personal, genuine response to a text produced a more impressive effect than a rehearsed presentation of established views. Candidates who knew the texts well - and who were then able to express ideas informed by their own views of their contents – often went on to perform effectively in answers (see Exemplar 1). Many answers in this series were informed by contemporary ideas about the fluidity – rather than binary nature - of aspects of the human condition. Ideas about "patriarchy", "#MeToo", and "toxic masculinity" also made frequent appearances in answers. So too, unfortunately, did the invented connective "thusly".

Exemplar 1

and male version of a same person. The play's discussion of gender's fluidity is taken quite seriously in the modern era, whereas this might be more of a comic element in the 17th Century because it is very complex to interpret. From these three relationships discussed above, the queer reading of the play is presented to audiences, which reflects the idea that people may not have essence that is determined by gender.

Finally, as a general point, it is worth reminding candidates and teachers that literary technical terminology should be used with care in these answers. It is not a necessary prerequisite for a candidate's strong performance; technical terms 'used for the sake of it' and without any connection to the wider purpose of a developing argument are probably best avoided (especially when those terms seem to have been sourced from some of the more obscure areas of the study of Classical languages).

Section 1 overview

Once again, some very impressive responses were seen to both part (a) and part (b) questions. More candidates now seem to bear in mind the fact that there will always be some sort of link or connection between the content of the set passage in part (a) and the part (b) essay question on the same Shakespeare play. Some candidates plan ahead for both answers together to take account of this. It is also worth reminding centres once again of OCR's stated policy to select passages for consideration in part (a) from the Alexander text of Shakespeare's works. This will have implications for the choice of edition used in the classroom. It would be sensible for centres to remind candidates about both these points. A very small number of candidates didn't meet the requirements of the paper as they answered on a different Shakespeare play for the context and essay parts of the question. An even smaller number of candidates chose incorrectly to write about one of the context passages as if it was an excerpt from one of the other plays set.

Confusion continues to exist among some candidates about the use of terms such as 'poetry', 'prose', 'verse' and 'blank verse' in Shakespeare responses. Once again these were often presented as entirely interchangeable concepts and it is worth reiterating that candidates unable to distinguish between such key elements could place themselves at a disadvantage (see Exemplar 2).

Exemplar 2

Some candidates still choose to comment in an unhelpful way on punctuation marks (particularly exclamation marks) in Shakespeare context passages, when they might in fact have been features of textual editing. Whereas there have been notable improvements in candidates' approach to context questions in the last three years, this emphasis on punctuation continues to have a negative impact on some answers (see Exemplar 3).

Exemplar 3

It is worth remembering that candidates are invited to respond not only to linguistic techniques in the context passages but also to explicit and implicit dramatic methods. It was very good to note that many candidates had not only acquired impressive factual knowledge about Shakespeare's linguistic techniques and dramatic effects during the course of their studies but also that they were able to apply

subtle ideas derived from the development of broader skills. Examiners frequently commented that candidates performed most successfully not when they offloaded pre-prepared information about passages and topics but instead when they thought flexibly and creatively during the examination (even when the passage chosen and topic set for the text on the paper were perhaps not expected by the candidate).

Question 1 (a)

1 Coriolanus

Answer **both** parts **(a)** and **(b)**.

(a) Discuss the following passage from Act 4 Scene 5 exploring Shakespeare's use of language and dramatic effects.

[15]

This text continues to grow (very slightly) in popularity. Some very good responses to the passage were seen. Candidates tended to treat the passage as a text 'of two halves' and most of them relished the opportunity to focus on the titular hero himself – with frequent references to his self-aggrandisement and self-obsession. Many answers chose to focus on the long final speech with its many rhetorical devices and flourishes. Candidates interested in dramatic – as well as linguistic – effects tended to focus on the 'coup de theatre' of the "Unmuffling" stage direction. It is hoped that centres and candidates will continue to focus on *Coriolanus* as the play grows in popularity.

Question 1 (b)

(b) 'The conflicts presented in the play are rarely straightforward.'

Using your knowledge of the play as a whole, show how far you agree with this view of the play *Coriolanus*.

Remember to support your answer with reference to different interpretations.

[15]

Many candidates seemed prepared to write about conflicts in *Coriolanus*; only some chose to evaluate how straightforward the various conflicts in the play are. Many candidates took the opportunity to consider conflicts in the play on a number of levels: personal and public; internal and external; domestic and political; in peace and at war. Most candidates agreed with the statement in the prompt quotation and many commented on how the tone of conflict affects every aspect of the language of the play. Some helpful critical/performance material was cited to support AO5 in this answer and – as ever with questions of this type – better answers tended to synthesise a developing argument rather than just provide a list of the play's different conflicts.

Question 2 (a)

2 Hamlet

Answer **both** parts **(a)** and **(b)**.

(a) Discuss the following passage from Act 5 Scene 1, exploring Shakespeare's use of language and its dramatic effects.

[15]

This was – by far – the most popular text on the paper. This very popular question was often answered very successfully, and many candidates seemed to relish its appearance in the paper. Candidates were particularly good at placing the passage in the context of the rest of *Hamlet* – in considering its location related to so much cumulative preceding action in the play, in observing the change of tone in the comic content (which also served to highlight the perhaps unexpected frequency of comic elements elsewhere in the play) and in recognising the relief presented by the shift of focus away from the Elsinore Castle hot-house. Candidates were quick to discuss the use of prose and of song in the passage. See Exemplar 4.

Some candidates considered the passage as another "text of two halves" although many offered a parallel view of the Clowns on the one hand and the Hamlet/Horatio pairing on the other. Many candidates extended their view of the scene to include discussion of the famous "Alas, poor Yorick!" section. It wasn't necessary for candidates to 'explain' the more obscure allusions or references in the language of the passage; observations about the broader patterns and effects in the language were equally welcome.

Exemplar 4

Written in prose, the exchange between the clowns or ~~CTS~~ is comedic ~~and chosen~~ and with the creates a sense of situational irony, ~~The~~ pair ~~are~~ joking ∨ happily about death and 'gallows' in ~~a~~ the dark, morbid setting of the grave yard. This contradiction ~~differentiation~~ between the setting and the dark upbeat, jovial conversation creates a sense of tension and uneasiness for the audience, who would not expect such light-hearted banter in such a ~~dark set~~ scene. Additionally, the use of

Question 2 (b)

(b) 'In the play *Hamlet* the comedy always makes serious points.'

Using your knowledge of the play as a whole, show how far you agree with this view of the play *Hamlet*.

Remember to support your answer with reference to different interpretations.

[15]

Responses to this question were generally very effective indeed and – in fact – often surprised and delighted examiners as a highlight of this summer's paper. There was frequently a sense that candidates who wrote on this topic did so imaginatively and with a fresh, creative approach which was not hindered by rehearsed, generalised ideas. Examiners were prepared to accept a wide range of responses to the question and rewarded any relevant ideas about comedy in *Hamlet*, connection with the play's more overtly serious intent, and therefore exploration of genre, tone, and varieties of interpretation. A very wide range of responses was seen but it was notable that candidates tended to rise to any possible challenges in the question and produce interesting, engaged, personalised responses. It would have been entirely possible for a candidate to construct an excellent response to the question by focusing on some of the comic/humorous qualities highlighted – both in the Clowns and in Hamlet himself – in the accompanying context passage (part a). Many candidates then took Hamlet himself as a starting point for their answer, looking in detail at the humorous nature of so many of his linguistic utterances (whether deriving from his punning, satirical view of the world or from his possibly assumed "antic disposition"). Some of Hamlet's exchanges with Ophelia also provided useful material. Candidates also chose to comment on the characters of Polonius, Osric, Rosencrantz/Guildenstern and even Gertrude. The performance by the players (and the audience's reaction to that) provided further material for some as did broader discussion of Shakespeare's approach to tragedy generally and of his use of 'comic relief'.

Candidates often satisfied AO5 by presenting their own views about how much comedy there is in the play overall. See Exemplar 5.

They also sometimes cited relevant observations by professional critics. Overwhelmingly though – and notably – this criterion was satisfied by excellent and focused consideration of productions of the play in which the comic elements have been emphasised – particularly in the most recent version at Shakespeare's Globe, at the RSC in 2016, and in several adaptations for the small and big screen (notably Gibson/Branagh/Tennant). See Exemplar 6.

Exemplar 5

Directors have the choice to introduce comedy from act 1 scene 1 as they have the ability to make the ghost visible to the audience or not. If not, the characters of Horatio, Bernado and Marcellus can be laughed at by the audience here which proves Edwards' comment that 'the identity of the ghost is of fundamental importance' as it relates to the serious point that the sighting of the ghost forms Hamlet's actions and if Horatio, a sceptic and a scholar is portrayed to the audience as laughable for speaking to a ghost 'I charge thee speak' when it is not visible to the audience, creates a serious point to the audience as the audience then doubts the character of Horatio who is of fundamental importance to the audience as he is the trustworthy character not only to Hamlet, as 'a true representation of friendship' according to Pope, but also the trustworthy character to the audience as he is responsible for proving Claudius' guilt during the Mouse-trap or the play within the play.

Exemplar 6

charming characters while many critics refuted
Brannagh's adaptation, & describing the comedic elements as
'misplaced' and 'ineffective'. the inclusion of these
scenes presents Hamlet as a political drama light-hearted
with light-hearted elements. ~~too~~ successfully showing that Shakespeare's comedy explores genius and
horrits.

Question 3 (a)

3 **Measure for Measure**

Answer **both** parts **(a)** and **(b)**.

(a) Discuss the following passage from Act 3 Scene 1, exploring Shakespeare's use of language and
its dramatic effects.

[15]

This was a fairly popular question. Interest in study of the play at this level seems to be growing. This continues to be a play which engages young adults (and others) notably. Responses are generally thoughtful and individual. Many candidates seemed to be delighted that a Claudio/Isabella dialogue was offered for this part of the paper and some chose to contextualise it by relating it to other charged encounters between these two characters. Some answers also offered brief but meaningful focus on the short contributions of the Duke and the Provost to the passage, emphasising the shift from prose to verse after their contributions and also pointing out the dramatic establishment of a framing device as Vincentio is led off to overhear the dialogue which forms the bulk of the passage (complete – as it is – with formal structures and rhetorical devices). Some candidates chose to address the presence of the so-called 'Prenzie Crux' in the passage (line 55) but this was not a requirement for candidates to perform well.

Question 3 (b)

(b) 'For a play that ends happily *Measure for Measure* has a lot to say about death.'

Using your knowledge of the play as a whole, show how far you agree with this view of *Measure for Measure*.

Remember to support your answer with reference to different interpretations.

[15]

This fairly popular question was often answered very well, and it provided candidates with an opportunity to write effectively about aspects of the set play which seemed to engage them considerably. Many candidates chose to question both the fact that the play "ends happily" and that it "has a lot to say about death" and interesting critical choices were often cited to back up views. This often led to discussion of the 'problematic' status of the play with consideration of the views of Tillyard and others. Discussion of genre more broadly (comedy; tragedy; the fusion of the two) featured in many answers. Indeed, more sophisticated answers sometimes offered a view that the mixing of ideas and approaches in the play suggested something about the complexity both of Shakespeare's art and of the human experience.

Question 4 (a)

4   **Richard III**

Answer **both** parts **(a)** and **(b)**.

(a)   Discuss the following passage from Act 5 Scene 3, exploring Shakespeare's use of language and
      its dramatic effects.

[15]

Unfortunately, this text continues to be the least popular Shakespeare option on this paper. A few
candidates tended to answer this question very well with particular emphasis on the dramatic effects in
the passage (with its reprise of the play's tragic actions) and on King Richard's extended final speech
(with its passionate tone). Candidates seemed to enjoy the chance to concentrate on these events which
take place the night before the Battle of Bosworth and to consider the impact on the cumulative effect of
the play as it nears its conclusion.

Question 4 (b)

(b)   'The play *Richard III* dramatises the conflict between good and evil.'

Using your knowledge of the play as a whole, show how far you agree with this view.

Remember to support your answer with reference to different interpretations.

[15]

The few candidates who answered this question sometimes saw it as a straightforward opportunity to
address a key element of the play and to present ideas from a binary perspective (which was an entirely
appropriate approach). Others attempted to synthesise a more sophisticated attitude and to consider
'grey areas' of the topic – with an emphasis (as prompted) on the idea of conflict. Candidates chose to
cite a number of established critical views to support their consideration of the question and they also
drew on a significant range of performed versions of the script (both on the stage and on-screen). Many
candidates chose to make the most of the word "dramatises" in the prompt quotation when considering
the play's performance history.

Question 5 (a)

5   **The Tempest**

Answer **both** parts **(a)** and **(b)**.

(a)   Discuss the following passage from Act 2 Scene 1, exploring Shakespeare's use of language and
      its dramatic effects.

[15]

This was a popular text choice with candidates working right across the mark range. Many candidates
were able to contextualise the passage as it relates to the more general involvement of the Italian nobles
in the play and also in terms of the ways in which these characters fit in to broader life on the island.
Many candidates seemed well prepared to write about Gonzalo's vision of the commonwealth as
presented in the passage. Revelations about the distinct identities and characteristics of the three
characters in the passage were juxtaposed with observations about ways in which their respective
linguistic tropes connected with each other. A general sense of the fractious and negative was observed
in the passage by most candidates. Some candidates referred to Montaigne's essay *Of Cannibals* in

their answer and such references were most appropriate if they were connected to the broader linguistic and dramatic features of the passage.

Question 5 (b)

(b) 'The play encourages us to admire idealistic values such as those of Gonzalo.'

Using your knowledge of the play as a whole, show how far you agree with this view of *The Tempest*.

Remember to support your answer with reference to different interpretations.

[15]

This popular question was often well answered. Some candidates working towards the lower end of the ability range presented generalised character sketches of Gonzalo. In fact, the question invites rather more than this – with the intended focus being on idealistic values and the ways in which these are represented in a variety of contexts in *The Tempest*. As such many candidates chose to focus on the character of Prospero. Candidates seemed to be divided about any presentation of idealism in the play with many suggesting that in fact opposite values tend to dominate the plot in a number of different ways. It was entirely possible to answer this question well by focusing on the character of Gonzalo alone – perhaps especially if reference was made to his Act 5 presentation of a moral vision. *The Tempest* is always a play which provokes strong individual responses of many different kinds and – once again – a sense of candidates enjoying their personal engagement with the play, its characters and themes, was evident. See Exemplar 7.

Answers made frequent reference to critical material and to the wide range of performance versions now often easily accessible.

Exemplar 7

unconvincing and unrealistic. Thus, as an audience we show empathy and understanding towards the courtiers, especially for Alonso who has "lost" his son. Antonio also provides negative connotations towards certain social groups in Jacobean society. He refers to "whores" and "knaves", the usage suggests a level of exploitation and discrimination towards those groups that are affected by such words. Therefore,

Question 6 (a)

6 *Twelfth Night*

Answer **both** parts **(a)** and **(b)**.

(a) Discuss the following passage from Act 1 Scene 4, exploring Shakespeare's use of language and its dramatic effects.

[15]

This was a popular text choice. Many candidates seemed to relish the opportunities afforded by the passage – and by the play as a whole – to explore linguistic and dramatic reflections of the play's broader concerns with gender, sexuality, and love. Some candidates commented correctly on the fact that the passage presented is a complete scene from the play - and is mainly a teasing dialogue between the Duke and Viola which is dominated by the dramatic irony inherent in their situation. Language of passion and affection dominates the scene and some candidates chose to comment on ways in which this will change and adapt as the complicated action of the play develops. Some answers pointed out that a homoerotic slant is already developing at this early stage in the play. See Exemplar 8. The teasing subtlety of the exchanges between Viola and the Duke (with their repeated shared lines, for example) was a frequent area of focus. The minor contribution of Valentine was afforded significance in some responses.

Exemplar 8

womans part". To the audience, both Elizabethan and modern, this creates a dramatic effect of amusement through the use of dramatic irony. Of course, the audience know that 'Cesario' is simply Viola in disguise and the fact that Orsino is alluding to this without realising it is undoubtably comedic. Many critics have however analysed this further, believing the "maidens organ" to be a "reference to sexual organs" (David Hussington). This adds to the confusion of gender and sexual identity that is already so prevalent in Shakesperean 'Twelfth Night', adding a comedic effect but also a sense of tension. This is far more

Question 6 (b)

(b) 'The play's notions of gender are very complex.'

Using your knowledge of the play as a whole, show how far you agree with this view of *Twelfth Night*.

Remember to support your answer with reference to different interpretations.

[15]

This question seemed to be welcomed by many candidates and there were many impressive answers seen (although essays across most of the mark range were noted by examiners). Some answers provided a moderately successful 'list' of instances in the play where ideas about gender are explored. Other candidates adopted a more sophisticated approach and attempted to synthesise a subtle argument about the play's broader concerns with gender. The topic seemed to chime well with some candidates' contemporary concerns with 'gender issues' and the term "non-binary" featured in many answers. Other candidates took the opportunity to employ relevant historical material about the Shakespearean tradition of all-male casts. Both professional critical views and instances from performance history of the play were often cited to good effect – with a particular focus for the latter on recent single-sex or gender-blind/reversed castings of the play (such as the Emma Rice production at Shakespeare's Globe).

Section 2 overview

Key point call out

Examiners noted further general improvements in the way many candidates approached this part of the paper. The 'false start and re-routed choice' approach now seems to have disappeared. Candidates seem to have responded well to the advice to think ahead and plan in order to make the best question choice for their combination of texts (although examiners certainly have no pre-conceived notions about this). Once again it was evident that the selection of questions provided enabled candidates to write about every possible combination of set texts available and from a number of different angles. There continues to be a hierarchy of popularity when it comes to the texts on the set lists, but it was good to note something of a swing towards both Maud and An Ideal Husband in this series. The topic of gender was once again very popular in this part of the paper during this series (even when it wasn't necessarily the ostensible focus of the question chosen by the candidate). Generalisations about context were often made – and these could be particularly unhelpful when applied to the apparently ever-guilty and/or suffering "Victorians". York Notes proved to be a notably popular source in this series for interpretative observations.

Question 7

In your answer, you should refer to one drama text and one poetry text from the following lists:

Drama	Poetry
Christopher Marlowe: *Edward II* John Webster: *The Duchess of Malfi* Oliver Goldsmith: *She Stoops to Conquer* Henrik Ibsen: *A Doll's House* Oscar Wilde: *An Ideal Husband*	Geoffrey Chaucer: *The Merchant's Prologue and Tale* John Milton: *Paradise Lost Books 9 & 10* Samuel Taylor Coleridge: *Selected Poems* Alfred, Lord Tennyson: *Maud* Christina Rossetti: *Selected Poems*

7 *'Literature often celebrates the strong bonds between human beings.'*

In the light of this view, consider ways in which writers explore the strength of human relationships. In your answer, compare one drama text and one poetry text from the above lists.

[30]

This was a popular question which enabled candidates to respond in a number of different ways with respect to all text combinations. Candidates recognised that human relationships are at the heart of most literary works, but they were divided about whether the relationships portrayed were strong ones and about whether there was a sense of celebration in their portrayal. Although answers towards the lower end of the mark range tended to list various examples of human connections presented in their choice of set texts, better answers synthesised the information chosen and incorporated elements of contextual material in order to present a unified theory about the bonds between human beings and the ways in which these are presented in literary works. See Exemplar 9.

Some impressive answers charted the ways in which the degree of strength within a relationship fluctuated during the course of a text; others explored how human connections could be perceived in different ways when local matters of context were considered.

Exemplar 9

Robert Chiltern and Lord Goring. Despite being an
Individualist as the wilde himself, he helps both two
Lady Chiltern and Robert chiltern, Robert thanking
him by saying "you are such a good friend to
be me Arthur. A critic in a BBC documentary
suggested that ultimatley, Goring as the "hero" is
rewarded with Mabels Love. This would suggest
that despite wildes values of Individualism, he
celebrates the value of friendship and "strong bonds
between humans" alike Rossetti.

Question 8

8   'Stereotypes about gender are as inappropriate in literature as they are in life.'

In the light of this view, consider ways in which writers explore gender roles. In your answer, compare one drama text and one poetry text from the above lists.

[30]

This was certainly a very popular question and – indeed – seemed for some candidates to be the topic they had been hoping to write about in the examination. It did require candidates to adapt any generalised pre-prepared ideas about this topic area as a whole to the specific requirements of this question. Evidence in the best answers suggested that creative flexibility had been employed to maximise the chances to answer the question (as required above all by examiners) and then to incorporate appropriate contextual material. Once again it seemed that gender as a topic appeals to many young adults today – in the context of a world where centuries-old concepts of binary gender roles have been swept aside by a new way of envisaging this aspect of human experience. Context was again to the fore, although, in many answers which chose to state that – in literary works at least – gender has rarely been a fixed concept. The key word 'stereotypes' – with all the injustices implied by it - was also focused on by many candidates. See Exemplar 10. It is fair to say that – in nearly every case – candidates tended to present an argument which broadly agreed with the statement in the prompt quotation. Ideas about gender roles in the Victorian era (many of which were themselves stereotypes) did not always help candidates to construct an answer of appropriate subtlety.

Exemplar 10

and they could finally get proper jobs. Henrik Ibsen's play took a a new stance in theatre - Realism. He sought to present his play as close to reality as he could; therefore, in relation to the statement, 'Stereotypes about gender are as inappropriate in literature as they are in life.', Ibsen fits perfectly within this. He desired to show that these gender stereotypes were not okay.

Question 9

9 *'Literature too often undervalues qualities of kindness and compassion.'*

In the light of this view, consider ways in which writers explore kind and compassionate behaviour. In your answer, compare one drama text and one poetry text from the above lists.

[30]

Some answers to this question were seen although it was not one of the most popular options. Most candidates tended to present the idea that kindness and compassion were qualities found only rarely in the texts they had chosen to study and compare. Candidates tended to point out that opposing qualities tended to dominate many texts, presenting (as they so often did) a world of cynicism and selfishness. There were exceptions - and some answers made good use of instances where kind, compassionate behaviour triumphed (which often emerged in surprising, comparatively minor elements of the texts being discussed – such as the Queen's early selflessness in *Edward II* and Krogstad's relationship with Mrs Lind in *A Doll's House*). Successful answers responded well to the requirement to include contextual material (AO3) as candidates conveyed the idea that compassion and kindness have been valued in different ways at different times and in varying contexts. The conventions of revenge tragedy in *The Duchess of Malfi* mean that there is very little room for compassion in that world, for example.

Question 10

10 *'Literary works often explore the consequences of human error.'*

In the light of this view, consider ways in which writers explore poor decisions. In your answer, compare one drama text and one poetry text from the above lists.

[30]

This seemed to be a fairly popular question. Errors and poor decisions of various kinds abound in the set text selection and candidates seemed keen to explore these and to place them in the contexts (dominant AO) of the times and places in which the works were written. Candidates explored such instances from the politically inept choices of Edward II to the 'mistakes of a night' in Goldsmith's play to the impact of poor past decisions on current events in *An Ideal Husband*. As ever, candidates working at the lower end of the mark range tended to provide a 'list' of these elements while more successful candidates took the opportunity to synthesise a more structured, developing response which also took into account the importance of AO4 and the requirement to compare the two chosen texts. Some candidates took the opportunity to 'twist' this question towards discussion of good judgement in their chosen texts and it was entirely possible for a candidate to succeed with this approach if the overall framework of the question set was borne in mind.

Question 11

11 *'The instinct to control others is natural in humanity.'*

In the light of this view, consider ways in which writers explore control and authority. In your answer, compare one drama text and one poetry text from the above lists.

[30]

This was a popular question. Answers across the ability range were seen. The question's emphasis on authority and control provided plenty of opportunities for candidates to discuss these elements in all the texts on the set list and – significantly – this seemed to be a topic which provoked genuine, personal interest in an area which is apparently (according to many candidates) a dominant feature of modern life. Answers were successful, of course, when contextual consideration of control and authority was related back to literary discussion of the set texts themselves and when that discussion took place within a framework of lively, comparative analysis (AO4). See Exemplar 11.

Candidates tended to be in agreement with the proposition in the prompt quotation and were often adept at conveying the idea that control and authority can take a variety of forms as represented in literary works – from the 'Maistrie' of Chaucer's world to the rather less threatening power relations presented in *She Stoops to Conquer* to the struggles to exert or manage control by divine and semi-divine characters in Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

Exemplar 11

threatening these women with phallic weapons. For
chaucer's January he threatens. May with his "corage ...
so sharp and keen", in the same way Ferdinand
threatens The Duchess in her bedroom with his
"father's poinard", hinting at unspeakable and forbidden
incestuous desires, such subject of incest was often
dealt with in Jacobean tragedies, such as 'Tis a
pity she's a whore' by John Ford and Shakespeare's
Hamlet. Both Webster and chaucer explore through
these sadistic male characters how women were
forced to endure such suffering on account of not
having the power authority or (phallic) weapons
to fight back.

Question 12

12 **'Happiness is difficult to find and difficult to keep.'**

In the light of this view, consider ways in which writers explore happiness. In your answer, compare one drama text and one poetry text from the above lists.

[30]

This was another very popular question – and one which enabled candidates to define (within reason) their own notion of the key word 'happiness' and to convey ways in which this term has had different implications in the various contexts in which the separate set texts have been written and received. Some candidates discussed the idea of changes of Fortune in the world of *Edward II*, for example. This was another topic which prompted a significant amount of personal response and theorising from many candidates. Once again, this was useful and relevant in answers where the material presented was at once related back to the question and also considered appropriately in the context (dominant AO) of the texts under consideration. Some answers were effective in suggesting that the concept of happiness moved beyond a state of mere personal fulfilment in some texts to become an integral aspect of genre and structure (for example in the conclusion of *She Stoops to Conquer*). Many candidates were successful in pointing out that modern concepts of personal happiness and fulfilment did not always sit comfortably alongside historical variants of this idea. The resulting conclusion of many candidates was that happiness is indeed both difficult to find and difficult to keep – and evidence for this seemed easy to find in all the texts in the set lists – although most were able to invoke at least minor instances of the quality in many of the works under discussion.

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