



AS

English Literature B

7716/1B Literary Genres: Drama: Aspects of Comedy
Final Mark Scheme

7716
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Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Assessment Writer.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from aqa.org.uk

Information for Examiners marking Aspects of comedy: closed book

Welcome to this mark scheme which is designed to help you deliver fair and accurate assessment. Please read all sections carefully and ensure that you follow the requirements that they contain.

The significance of closed book

Examiners must understand that in marking a closed book exam there are examining implications. Students do not have their texts in front of them, so while it is expected that they will use quotations, it is also legitimate to use close textual references. They will have had to memorise quotations so there may be some errors which should not be over penalised. Detailed discussions of particular sections of texts are less likely here than in open book exams. Instead, students may range broadly across their texts as they construct their arguments.

There are specific issues for AO2 – how meanings are shaped in texts. Students will not have the texts in front of them, so although they will sometimes be able to make specific references to structural and organisational issues, at other times they will be more general.

Arriving at Marks

1. All questions are framed to address all the Assessment Objectives (AOs). Weightings are given above the generic mark scheme. Answers are marked holistically but, when deciding upon a mark in a band, examiners should bear in mind the relative weightings of the assessment objectives (see page 5) and be careful not to over/under credit a particular skill. This will be exemplified and reinforced as part of examiner training and standardisation. Examiners need to read the whole answer taking into account its strengths and weaknesses and then place it in the appropriate band.
2. Examiners should avoid making early snap judgements before the whole answer has been read. Some students begin tentatively but go on to make relevant points.
3. Examiners should be prepared to use the full mark range and not ‘bunch’ scripts in the middle for safety. Top marks are attainable if students could not be expected to do more in the time and under the conditions in which they are working.
4. Examiners should mark positively. Although the mark scheme provides some indicators for what students are likely to write about, examiners should be willing to reward what is actually there – **provided of course, that it is relevant to the question being asked.**
5. Examiners should remember that there is not only one right answer. Students’ views which are relevant, well-argued and supported by appropriate textual evidence must receive credit whether the examiner agrees with the views or not. It is important to try to remain flexible if a student introduces unusual or unorthodox ideas.
6. Examiners should remember that length and quality are not synonymous. Some brief answers may be relevant and concise. Equally, long answers may be diffuse and repetitive.
7. If answers are short or incomplete, examiners can only reward what is there and assess accordingly. Some further credit can be given to answers finished in note form.

Using the Mark Bands

8. When placing answers in mark bands, examiners need to look closely at the descriptors and the detailed generic mark bands on page 7. The key words for the bands are important and are printed below.

MARK BAND DESCRIPTORS	
Band 5 (21–25)	perceptive/assured
Band 4 (16–20)	coherent/thorough
Band 3 (11–15)	straightforward/relevant
Band 2 (6–10)	simple/generalised
Band 1 (1–5)	largely irrelevant, largely misunderstood, largely inaccurate

9. Answers placed at the top of the band will securely address the descriptors; answers at the lower end of the band will securely address the descriptors below and begin to show the qualities of the band into which you are placing them. Careful judgements need to be made about marks in the middle of the range; here it is likely that the key descriptors will be more intermittent but still clearly evident.
10. There will be occasions when an answer addresses descriptors in different bands; in such cases, the ‘best-fit’ model applies. Here examiners will need to exercise a different kind of judgement, looking to see where the answer can be most fairly and appropriately placed in terms of its quality against the descriptors.
11. Examiners must remember that the mark bands are not equivalent to grades: grades are decided by the awarding committee at the end of each session.

Advice about marking each section

Section A

12. Examiners need to bear in mind the following key points when marking extract based questions:
- does the student have an overview of the extract?
 - has the student written about dramatic method?
 - has the student quoted from the extract to support ideas?
 - the student’s AO1 competence.

In the case of a significant omission to an answer the examiner should not give a mark higher than Band 4.

Section B

13. Examiners need to bear in mind the following key points when marking questions based on single texts:
- has the student engaged in a relevant debate or constructed a relevant argument?
 - has the student referred to different parts of the text to support their views?
 - has the student referred to the author's dramatic method?
 - the student's AO1 competence.

In the case of a significant omission to an answer the examiner should not give a mark higher than Band 4.

Annotation

14. Examiners should remember that annotation is directed solely to senior examiners.
15. In addition to giving a mark, examiners should write a brief summative comment indicating how the mark has been arrived at. These comments are likely to mirror the appropriate mark band descriptors but comments must not be mechanical. Examiners need to describe student performance.
16. Please remember that scripts can go back to students, so although your audience is a senior examiner, you must express your views temperately.

The assessment objectives and their significance

17. All questions are framed to test AOs 5, 4, 3 and 2, so if students answer the question, then they will be addressing the AOs. In marking questions, however, examiners must also take account of AO1.

The AOs are as follows:

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations. (12%)

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts. (12%)

AO3 Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received. (24%)

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts. (24%)

AO1 Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression. (28%)

It is important to remember that these students are 16 to 17 years old, so we are judging their skills at a midway point in Key Stage 5.

Weightings for each question are as follows:

AO5: 3 marks AO4: 3 marks AO3: 6 marks AO2: 6 marks AO1: 7 marks

Mark	AO	Typical features	How to arrive at mark
Band 5 Perceptive/Assured 21-25 marks 'Perception' is demonstrated when students are showing the depth of their understanding and responding sensitively to the texts and task. 'Assuredness' is shown when students write with confidence and conviction.	AO5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceptive and confident engagement with the debate set up in the task 	This band is characterised by perceptive and assured work which shows confidence, sharpness of mind and sophistication in relation to the task. At the top of the band students are consistently assured and will demonstrate sensitivity and perception across all five assessment objectives in the course of their response. At the bottom of the band there will be coherence and accuracy with some perception but with less consistency and evenness.
	AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> perceptive exploration of connections across literary texts arising out of generic study 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> perceptive understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task assuredness in the connection between those contexts and the genre studied 	
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> perceptive understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task assured engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used 	
	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> perceptive, assured and sophisticated argument in relation to the task assured use of literary critical concepts and terminology; mature and impressive expression 	
Band 4 Coherent/ Thorough 16-20 marks 'Coherence' is shown when students are logical and consistent in their arguments in relation to the task. They hold their ideas together in an intelligible way. 'Thoroughness' is shown when students write carefully, precisely and accurately.	AO5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> thorough engagement with the debate set up in the task 	This band is characterised by coherent and thorough work where ideas are linked together in a focused and purposeful way in relation to the task. At the top of the band students will demonstrate a fully coherent and thorough argument across all five assessment objectives in the course of their response. At the bottom of the band ideas will be discussed in a shaped, relevant and purposeful way with a clear sense of direction, with one or two lapses in coherence and accuracy.
	AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> logical and consistent exploration of connections across literary texts arising out of generic study 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> thorough understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task coherence in the connection between those contexts and the genre studied 	
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> thorough understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task thorough engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used 	
	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> logical, thorough and coherent argument in relation to the task where ideas are debated in depth appropriate use of literary critical concepts and terminology; precise and accurate expression 	

<p>Band 3 Straightforward/ Relevant 11-15 marks</p> <p>‘Straightforward’ work is shown when students make their ideas in relation to the task clearly known.</p> <p>‘Relevant’ work is shown when students are focused on the task and use detail in an appropriate and supportive way.</p>	AO5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • straightforward engagement with the debate set up in the task 	<p>This band is characterised by straightforward and relevant work where the student’s response to the task is clear and intelligible.</p> <p>At the top of the band students will demonstrate consistent straightforward understanding in the course of their argument. Ideas will be developed relevantly.</p> <p>At the bottom of the band there will be flashes of relevant understanding with evidence of straightforward thinking.</p>
	AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explores connections across literary texts arising out of generic study in a straightforward way 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • straightforward understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task • relevant connections between those contexts and the genre studied 	
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • straightforward understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task • relevant engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used 	
	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sensibly ordered ideas in a relevant argument in relation to the task • some use of literary critical concepts and terminology which are mainly appropriate; straightforward and clear expression 	
<p>Band 2 Simple/Generalised 6-10 marks</p> <p>‘Simple’ work is shown when students write in an unelaborated and basic way in relation to the task.</p> <p>‘Generalised’ work is shown when students write without regard to particular details.</p>	AO5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple and generalised response to the debate set up in the task 	<p>This band is characterised by simple and generalised work which is mainly linked to the task.</p> <p>At the top of the band students will demonstrate a basic generalised understanding in the course of their answer. Ideas will be developed in a simple way.</p> <p>At the bottom of the band there will be inconsistency, but the beginnings of a simple and generalised understanding.</p>
	AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple exploration of connections across literary texts arising out of generic study 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task • generalised connections between those contexts and the genre studied 	
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task • generalised engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used 	
	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a simple structure to the argument which may not be consistent but which does relate to the task • generalised use of literary critical concepts and terminology; simple expression 	

<p>Band 1 Largely irrelevant/largely misunderstood/largely inaccurate 1-5 marks</p> <p>'Largely irrelevant' work is shown when students write in an unclear way with only occasional reference to what is required by the question.</p> <p>'Largely misunderstood' and 'largely inaccurate' work is shown when knowledge of the text is insecure, hazy and often wrong.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some vague points in relation to the task and some ideas about task and text(s) • the writing is likely to be unclear and incorrect; if it is accurate the content will be irrelevant • little sense of the AOs in relation to the task; little sense of how meanings are shaped; little sense of any relevant contexts; little sense of any connection arising out of generic study; little sense of an argument in relation to the task 	<p>This band is characterised by work which is largely irrelevant and largely misunderstood and largely inaccurate, and so unlikely to be addressing the AOs in a relevant way.</p> <p>At the top of the band students will mention some unconnected points in relation to the task during the course of their writing. The writing is likely to lack clarity.</p> <p>At the bottom of the band there will be no connection with the task; the writing will be hard to follow and irrelevant.</p>
<p>0 marks</p>		<p>No marks for response when nothing is written or where response has no connection to the text(s) or task.</p>	

Section A

0 1 *The Taming of the Shrew* – William Shakespeare

Explore the significance of aspects of dramatic comedy in the following passage in relation to the text as a whole.

You should consider the following in your answer:

- the presentation of Petruchio
- the roles of the Tailor and Grumio
- other relevant aspects of dramatic comedy.

[25 marks]

Some possible comment is given below. It suggests some of the ways the Assessment Objectives might be addressed, but as ‘significance’ relates to contextual, structural, linguistic and interpretative issues some strands listed could easily address more than one AO.

Examiners must also remember that because students have read and studied *The Taming of the Shrew* through the lens of **comedy**, the AOs will necessarily be connected with the genre through the task.

The students are given an extract so when working on that they should quote directly to support their ideas. This is a **closed book** exam, so while it is expected that students will use quotations when writing about some parts of the play it is also legitimate to make more general reference.

Please refer to pages 3 – 6.

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

With respect to meanings and interpretations:

There will be a variety of interpretations here in relation to readers and audiences. Some students may comment on the choices made by directors.

Some possible ideas:

- Petruchio's play-acting, pretence and extravagance
- Petruchio's confidence, control and bullying methods
- Petruchio's comedic interest in Katherine's dress
- the Tailor's defence of his own work despite Petruchio's dismissal of the gown
- Grumio's cheekiness, despite his lack of ability
- the reliance Petruchio has upon Grumio
- the wider use of servants as structural and plot devices in the play
- the play as a misogynistic text
- the problem of interpretation (especially for modern audiences) eg headstrong woman tamed by a man and his offensive nature
- the link between the extract and Petruchio's initial interest in Katherine being first prompted by her dowry and then later perhaps by real love for her
- the importance of this scene in the taming of Katherine
- the later idea that clothes are not important, eg 'these honest, mean habiliments'
- the relationship between this scene and Katherine's later love for Petruchio or their conspiracy or perhaps her passive submission
- etc

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts.

With respect to significance of connections with the wider comedic genre focus might be on:

- the comedic role and function of servants
- the comedic marriage as seen in the function and place of it in the extract and within the wider play
- the aspect of farce and absurdity within the scene eg Petruchio's way of dealing with the servants
- comedic slapstick and physical comedy eg Petruchio's movements and the altercations (feigned or otherwise) between Petruchio and the tailor and the tailor and Grumio
- the comedic role and function of women as seen in Petruchio's domination and mockery of Katherine
- etc

AO3 Demonstrate understanding of the significance of and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.

With respect to significance of contexts in relation to the task focus might be on:

- the cultural context in relation to the roles of masters and servants in Padua eg the Tailor, Grumio and Hortensio
- the gender context in relation to female representation and how Katherina is suppressed by Petruchio's strategy
- the class context in relation to masters and servants eg belaboured Grumio
- the literary context of Comedia del'arte in relation to comedic types and situations eg Grumio's browbeating the Tailor
- the social context of marriage in relation to Petruchio and Katherina's union eg Petruchio's power over Katherina and his outrageous behaviour which is seemingly legitimised in the comedy
- the sexual political context in relation to the inequalities between Petruchio and Katherina in relation to their marriage
- the economic context in relation to the tailor and the way he responds to the order for the dress eg he robustly defends himself
- etc

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

With respect to significance of dramatic methods in relation to the task focus might be on:

- the structural placing of this scene within the comedy and its significance in terms of resolving the plot eg Katherina's taming
- how the moment with the dress prepares the audience for what is to come eg the structural union at the end
- the use of irony, repetition, sarcasm and imagery by Petruchio
- Petruchio's language here as part of his taming school strategy
- the language of the tailor's instructions
- the use of puppet imagery
- the language of contestation over the sleeves
- etc

AO1 Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.

With respect to competence in writing:

- quality of argument
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and ideas
- technical accuracy

Accept any valid interpretations, any valid discussion of contexts and any valid discussion of dramatic methods.

0 2

Twelfth Night – William Shakespeare

Explore the significance of aspects of dramatic comedy in the following passage in relation to the text as a whole.

You should consider the following in your answer:

- the treatment of Malvolio and his response to it
- the use of disguise
- other relevant aspects of dramatic comedy.

[25 marks]

Some possible comment is given below. It suggests some of the ways the Assessment Objectives might be addressed, but as ‘significance’ relates to contextual, structural, linguistic and interpretative issues some strands listed could easily address more than one AO.

Examiners must also remember that because students have read and studied *Twelfth Night* through the lens of **comedy**, the AOs will necessarily be connected with the genre through the task.

The students are given an extract so when working on that they should quote directly to support their ideas. This is a **closed book** exam, so while it is expected that students will use quotations when writing about parts of the play it is also legitimate to make more general reference.

Please refer to pages 3 – 6.

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.**With respect to meanings and interpretations:**

There will be a variety of interpretations here in relation to readers and audiences. Some students may comment on the choices made by directors.

Some possible ideas:

- the comedy of the dissembling against Malvolio
- the cruelty inflicted on Malvolio and whether it is justified
- Malvolio’s gullibility and believing in his tormentors
- the desperation of Malvolio which could invite laughter or provoke sympathy
- the audience’s engagement with the dramatic irony of Malvolio’s incarceration
- the function and use of Feste as a jester and impersonator, the use of roles within roles
- Feste’s flexibility and skill in impersonation
- the joy of Feste’s performance and Sir Toby and Maria’s supportive roles
- trickery and deception and the link to counterfeiting
- the anti-authority figures such as Sir Toby and Maria –whether they are to be approved of
- possible Christian/Satanic interpretations
- audience laughter and awareness of the precariousness of the situation, linking to the dark-edged nature of the comedy here
- other disguises in the play which have a different purpose eg Viola as Cesario

- etc

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts.

With respect to significance of connections with the comedic genre focus might be on:

- comedic disorder as seen in the imprisonment of Malvolio eg how he is now inmate and not steward
- comedic mirth, laughter, revelry as seen as part of festive comedy eg how Maria orchestrates events
- comedic disguise and impersonation as seen in Feste and how he dresses up as Sir Topas
- comedic challenge to authority and order as seen in Sir Toby's acknowledgement he is 'in offence with my niece'
- comedic tragi-comedic feel of the text as seen in the dark edge of the comedy
- the comedic aspect of anarchy seen in the behaviour of Sir Toby, Maria and Feste and the link to the title *Twelfth Night* and possibly to the alternative title *What You Will*
- etc

AO3 Demonstrate understanding of the significance of and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.

With respect to significance of contexts in relation to the task focus might be on:

- the social context in relation to the interface between servants, itinerants and gentry
- the religious context in relation to the Puritan movement and how this informs the construction and actions of Malvolio and Sir Topas
- the psychological context suggesting how the mentally ill were treated in the Elizabethan period
- the ritual year context in relation to the play being set around Christmas time/ the context of the twelfth night celebrations
- the economic context in relation to Feste's survival, Sir Toby being housed by his niece, Malvolio as steward
- the mourning context of the setting of Lady Olivia's house in Illyria in relation to the implications of a house experiencing grief
- etc

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

With respect to significance of dramatic methods in relation to the task focus might be on:

- how disguise is introduced and used as a method of dressing up eg Feste puts on a gown and beard to impersonate the curate Sir Topas
- the structural importance of Maria and Sir Toby in setting up the trick at this point in the play
- the setting of Malvolio's prison cell
- the ending of the extract and the information given by Sir Toby that Feste (as himself) will go to visit Malvolio to report on his condition, Sir Toby's confession that

he now wishes he were 'well rid of this knavery'

- Malvolio's language – now fearful, pleading and conciliatory in contrast to how he spoke previously eg his incorporating imagery of hell, his repetitive use of Sir Topas' name
- Sir Toby's exaggerated reactions to Malvolio's imprisonment and the jest played upon him eg his use of exclamatories and words of praise for Sir Topas in contrast to his more reflective and functional language at the end of the extract
- Maria's measured, straightforward language in her planning of the jest and her simple and sensible observations of the outcome
- Feste's use of Christian and diabolical language and reference to Pythagoras
- puns, mis-hearings and wit which are developed in the dialogue
- the use of asides and comic hyperbole
- etc

AO1 Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.

With respect to competence in writing:

- quality of argument
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and ideas
- technical accuracy

Accept any valid interpretations, any valid discussion of contexts and any valid discussion of dramatic methods.

Section B

0 3 *She Stoops to Conquer* – Oliver Goldsmith

Explore the significance of the Hardcastles' home as a comedic setting.

Remember to include in your answer relevant comments on Goldsmith's dramatic methods.

[25 marks]

Some possible content is given below. It suggests some of the ways the Assessment Objectives might be addressed. Some idea will inevitably address more than one AO.

Examiners must also remember that because students have read and studied *She Stoops to Conquer* through the lens of **comedy**, the AOs will necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

This is a **closed book** exam, so while it is expected that students will use quotations when writing about parts of the play it is also legitimate to make more general reference.

Please refer to pages 3 – 6.

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

With respect to meanings and interpretations:

There will be a variety of interpretations here in relation to readers and audiences. Some students may comment on the choices made by directors.

Some possible ideas:

- the Hardcastles' home which is the setting to open the play and where characters, relationships and situations are established
- the home as country residence (which looks like an inn) contrasting with the ideas about homes of the town characters
- the home as a place of marital and familial discord and accord
- the home is the place (that becomes the inn) where Kate dissembles as a barmaid
- the home as the place of resolution where order is restored linking with traditional ideas about the home as a place of comfort and sanctity
- the home as a construction of an 'inn' which informs much of the comedy, as instigated by Tony Lumpkin
- Hardcastle's and Mrs Hardcastle's being unknowingly positioned as owners of the inn
- the ingenious plotting around the identity of the home
- etc

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts.

With respect to significance of connections with the wider comedic genre focus might be on:

- comedic location as seen in the house as a device
- comedic farce as seen in situations in the Hardcastles' home eg Kate's interaction

- as a barmaid with Marlow
- comedic genres as seen in elements of the Comedy of Manners
- comedic trickery and manipulation as seen in several characters' agendas eg how the home is the location for the trick played upon Marlow (that Kate is a barmaid who stoops to conquer)
- comedic deceit as seen in the plot and setting of the play eg the set-up of the house as an inn and Lumpkin's lie to deceive the gentlemen from the town
- comedic unities as seen in the three unities of Comedy found in the play eg Action, Time and Place in the Hardcastle's home
- etc

AO3 Demonstrate understanding of the significance of and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.

With respect to significance of contexts in relation to the task focus might be on:

- the social context and the expectations of an innkeeper and how he should treat and be treated by his guests
- the gender context and the behaviour of women and men in relation to the Harcastles' home eg Kate's initial subservience to her father and later her acting as a barmaid, Mrs Hardcastle's lack of power, Mr Hardcastle's initial authority and its later being challenged by Marlow and Hastings
- the context of settings and how the Hardcastles' home is seen by various characters.
- the social context of inns in relation to their being centres for bawdy and comic behaviour eg the charade is set up in *The Three Jolly Pigeons* but then transferred to the Hardcastles' home
- the familial context in relation to the relationships established and developed in the Hardcastles' home eg Mr and Mrs Hardcastle, Lumpkin, the proposed marriage of Kate and Marlow
- etc

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

With respect to significance of dramatic methods in relation to the task focus might be on:

- the setting of the Hardcastles' house which is 'old-fashioned' and 'looks for all the world like an inn'
 - the key piece of dramatic irony that the Hardcastles' home is misrepresented to the strangers as an inn by Tony Lumpkin
 - the time setting of the play's taking place over one night and the centrality of the Hardcastles' home in relation to this
 - Marlow and Hastings' arrival and their use of language as they react to the apparent hosts of the 'inn'
 - the language Hardcastle uses to show his forbearance and discontent in relation to Marlow and Hastings and their deeming his home an inn
 - Goldsmith's writing in different forms to represent different classes and their responses to the 'inn'
 - Marlow and Hastings' disdainful language in the Hardcastles' home
 - the structural importance of the home in relation to the carriage chase and *Crackskull Common*
 - the subplot of the jewels and the house as a context for this
 - the revelation at the end of the play that the Hardcastles' home is in fact not an inn
-

- etc

AO1 Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.

With respect to competence in writing:

- quality of argument
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and ideas
- technical accuracy

Accept any valid discussion of dramatic methods, any valid interpretations and any valid discussion of contexts.

Section B

0	4
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***The Importance of Being Earnest* – Oscar Wilde**

Explore the view that the comedy of *The Importance of Being Earnest* is always trivial and never serious.

Remember to include in your answer relevant comments on Wilde's dramatic methods.

[25 marks]

Some possible content is given below. It suggests some of the ways the Assessment Objectives might be addressed. Some idea will inevitably address more than one AO.

Examiners must also remember that because students have read and studied *The Importance of Being Earnest* through the lens of **comedy**, the AOs will necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

This is a **closed book** exam, so while it is expected that students will use quotations when writing about parts of the play it is also legitimate to make more general reference.

Please refer to pages 3 – 6.

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

With respect to meanings and interpretations:

Students may choose to look at all sides of the debate or just one. It is the quality of the student's response that matters.

Some students might consider:

- Wilde's subtitle for the play - *A Trivial Comedy for Serious People* and the paradoxes associated with this title which are echoed at various times during the play
- the self conscious and light hearted game playing of Algernon and Jack
- the triviality of the plot and key events in the play
- the trivial nature of the characters and their concerns
- the idea that the play is about fashion and 'looking good' and therefore trivial
- the seriousness of men and women behaving badly towards each other which the comedy trivialises
- the triviality of Jack's running to the country and then back to the city for pleasure
- Wilde's delight in engaging with the lack of seriousness to make sparkling comedy
- the way that the serious business of love is trivialised
- Wilde's use of farce and disguise to create a comedy that is trivial
- the play's being much ado about a handbag and a name
- Wilde giving his characters trivial wit to simply amuse and delight
- etc

Some students might consider:

- the play as a serious critique of Victorian double standards
- the play as a critique of the leisured classes, and of young men and women who have nothing serious to occupy themselves with
- the play's examination of the lack of truth in relationships which is disturbing and

serious

- the play's mockery of social custom and pretence with the intention of correcting behaviour
- the notion that false identity succeeds and this is worrying
- the play's being about fraud and therefore serious
- the play's exposure of the serious issue of men tricking and deceiving women
- etc

Some students might argue that the play is both serious and trivial and that the two terms are not mutually exclusive.

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts.

With respect to significance of connections with the wider comedic genre focus might be on:

- comedic triviality which often critiques society in a more serious way than it appears to do eg the seemingly insubstantial nature of the conversations between Jack and Algernon and Gwendolen and Cecily revealing perhaps an exposure of the superficiality at the heart of human relationships more generally
- comedic satire as seen in the way Wilde mocks those who lead double lives and those whose concerns are with trivial matters
- comedic disguise as seen in Jack and Algernon's double identities and the trivial or serious nature of this
- comedic farce as seen in several elements in the drama connected to trivial comedy eg the volley or entrances and exits in the Manor House setting of Act III coupled with the rapid use of questions and answers and accumulation of extraordinary revelations
- comedic resolution as seen in the unravelling of the mystery of the handbag
- etc

AO3 Demonstrate understanding of the significance of and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.

With respect to contextual issues arising from the question and the play focus might be on:

- the familial context in relation to relatives and their trivial/serious concerns
- the social class context in relation to snobbery and class consciousness and the trivial/serious aspects of this
- the pastoral context of the country and the city in relation to different attitudes and ideologies that could be discussed in terms of serious or trivial comedy
- the gender context and the different agendas of men and women in relation to trivial or serious comedy
- the Victorian context in relation to social manners and 'earnestness' and trivial or serious comedy
- the social context in relation to master and servant relationships in the play and how this informs ideas about trivial or serious comedy

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

With respect to analysis of dramatic methods in relation to the task focus might be on:

- the subtitle in the play and how it sets up ideas about triviality and seriousness
- Wilde's playing with words throughout the drama to foreground triviality
- the dialogue and the quick-fire exchanges about insubstantial concerns
- Lady Bracknell's elevated language and rhetoric which she uses to pronounce upon inconsequential matters
- Wilde's choice and use of names as both trivial and serious eg the light hearted play on words of Ernest and earnest and the importance of this name to Gwendolyn, the serious associations that come from Miss Prism's name (as a pun for misprision/ misunderstanding and its colour associations in physics)
- Wilde's (and Algernon's) invention of the terms Bunbury/Bunburyism and the comedy associated with the terms which might be seen as trivial or serious
- the structural use of comic disguise (arising from Bunburyism) and how this shapes ideas about the comedy being trivial or serious
- the play's resolution and Gwendolen's desire for Jack to be Ernest/serious and Lady Bracknell's final comment to her nephew that he seems to be 'displaying signs of triviality'
- the absurd and trivial denouement of Miss Prism's story, of the handbag and her manuscript and the serious information that is revealed
- etc

AO1 Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.

With respect to competence in writing:

- quality of argument
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and ideas
- technical accuracy

Accept any valid interpretations, any valid discussion of context and any valid discussion of dramatic methods.

or

0 5 *Educating Rita* – Willy Russell

Explore the significance of class differences to the comedy of the play.

Remember to include in your answer relevant comments on Russell’s dramatic methods.

[25 marks]

Some possible content is given below. It suggests some of the ways the Assessment Objectives might be addressed. Some idea will inevitably address more than one AO.

Examiners must also remember that because students have read and studied *Educating Rita* through the lens of **comedy**, the AOs will necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

This is a **closed book** exam, so while it is expected that students will use quotations when writing about parts of the play it is also legitimate to make more general reference.

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

With respect to meanings and interpretations focus might be on:

There will be a variety of interpretations here in relation to readers and audiences. Some students may comment on the choices made by directors.

Some possible ideas:

- the differences in life styles of the professional middle-class Frank and the working-class Rita
- the different ways of speaking which contribute to the comedy
- the different subject matter of their conversations because of their class differences
- the transition of Rita’s moving from the working class to academia and the learning afforded by it - leading to resolution
- the opportunity afforded to the working class by society (in terms of the Open University) which provides Rita with the chance to learn and better her life
- the bridging of classes through the comedic aspect of romance
- the academic subject matter which is ridiculed and debunked by Russell through Rita’s lack of reverence and her naturalistic honest responses to canonical texts and academic language
- the wider class differences found in different representations of Liverpool in the play
- the importance of class shifts in helping the audience to understand Rita’s journey eg she turns her back on her former life
- her losing her original class culture – showing comedic change
- the complexity of the loss of one class and the gaining of another as part of comic transition
- other minor characters who have to deal with class transitions
- etc

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts.

With respect to significance of connections with the comedic genre focus might be on:

- the comedic aspect of the working class as the butt or subject of comedy as shown through Rita's language, subject-matter and progress through the play
- the comedic aspect of learning and self-discovery, as seen in Rita's interest in literature, her desire for knowledge and the possibility of class mobility
- the comedic aspect of wit and repartee, as seen in the lively and heated debates between Frank and Rita
- the comedic aspect of dominant and intelligent women 'taking on' men as seen in Rita's ascendancy over Frank, Rita as comedic heroine
- the comedic aspects of love and romance as seen in the potential, and then thwarted, love affair between Frank and Rita
- etc

AO3 Demonstrate understanding of the significance of and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.

With respect to significance of contexts in relation to the task focus might be on:

- the social context including the working class background of Rita and the academic and privileged world of the university
- the cultural context as shown in the lives, interests and language choices of Rita and Frank
- the gender context as shown by Rita's discourse about female, working-class issues and Frank's discourse which is confident and assured (at least initially and especially in the telephone conversation with his wife)
- the 1970s context in revealing the prevailing attitudes towards the different social classes
- the historical context of the latter end of the twentieth century and the rise of the 'working classes' in relation to academic opportunities, the Open University, the 'opening of doors' within the play and the breaking down of class barriers
- etc

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

With respect to significance of dramatic methods in relation to the task focus might be on:

- the setting of the study as a symbol of the professional academic middle class
 - the structural contrasts and clashes in class throughout the play
 - the use of dialogue to bring out Rita's working-class origins via her reflections
 - the humorous dialogue between Frank and Rita which is borne of class differences
 - the use of flashback as a structural device to reveal more of Rita's working-class background
 - the use of intertextuality and the references to canonical writers to reveal Frank's and Rita's different classes eg Frank talks about Dickens, Henry James, *Howard's End*, *The Wild Swans at Coole* whereas Rita talks about Roger McGough and *Rubyfruit Jungle*
 - the use of different registers to reveal the different classes
 - the structural position of the summer school in London as a transition moment and part of Rita's comedic journey
-

- the key structural event of Rita's visit to the theatre in showing the difference between the classes
- etc

AO1 Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.

With respect to competence in writing:

- quality of argument
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and ideas
- technical accuracy

Accept any valid interpretations, any valid discussion of context and any valid discussion of dramatic methods.