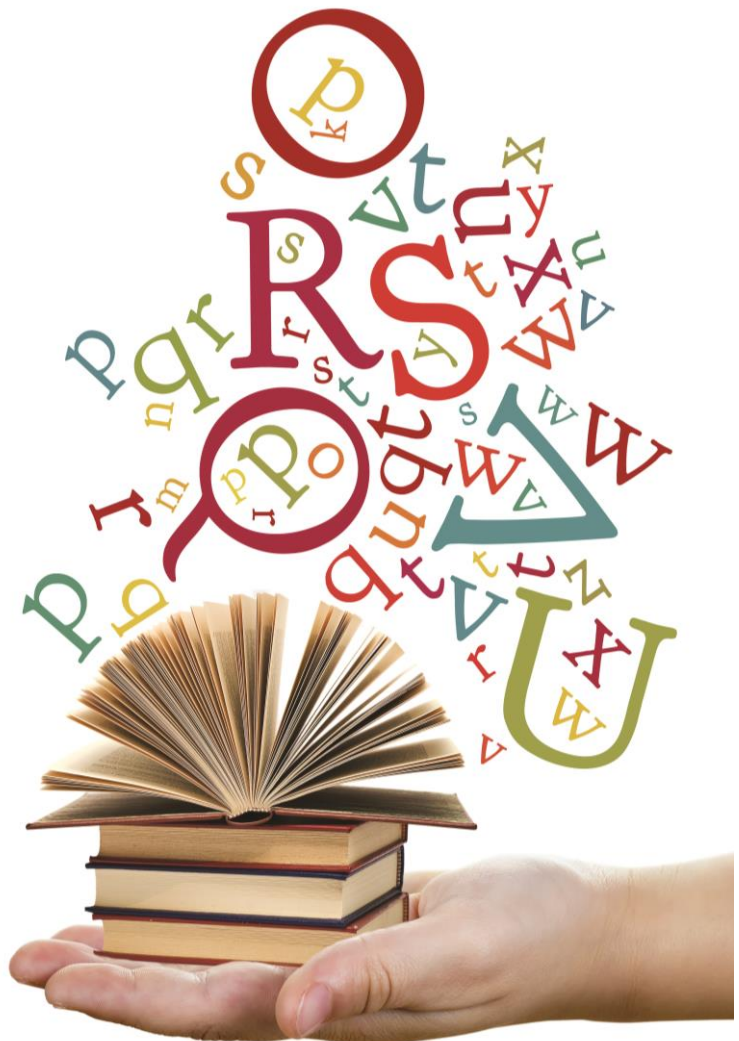


Guide to writing realistic practice papers

Write practice papers quicker and more accurately

A-level English
Language and Literature (7707)



Contents

This resource explains how exam questions for A-level English Language and Literature (7707) are created and guides you through the process of writing your own practice questions to use with students. It also highlights important aspects of the assessment objectives (AOs) and offers some advice that will support your teaching in preparation for the exam papers.

We have gathered together all the essential information you need in one place in this guide. Whether you're creating whole exam practice papers, or just specific questions for targeted intervention, use this resource for reassurance that what you're writing is realistic and helpful.

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Paper 1: Telling Stories

As detailed in the [specification](#) section 4.1, the aim of the area of study examined in this paper is to allow students to learn about how and why stories of different kinds are told. The term ‘telling’ in the title is deliberately chosen to reflect the twin aspects of *how* stories are told and *why* stories are ‘telling’, or valuable, within societies.

Section A: Remembered Places

In this section, students answer one compulsory question on the *AQA Anthology: Paris*. This section of the exam is a closed book which means students are not allowed to take their copy of the anthology into the exam. However, they will be provided with two extracts from the *AQA anthology: Paris* and the question will always follow the same structure.

Look at how Question 1 from the [specimen assessment materials](#) is constructed. In the specimen question below we have *italicised in red* those parts that will remain consistent from year to year.

Read Text A and Text B, printed below and on page 4.

*Text A is an extract from *Understanding Chic* by Natasha Fraser-Cavassoni.*

*Text B is an extract from the ‘Paris Travel Forum’ on *Trip Advisor* in response to the posted question ‘What do you wish that someone had told you?’*

Compare and contrast how the writers of these texts express their ideas about people living in or visiting Paris.

You should refer to both texts in your answer.

You can see from the specimen question that there will always be:

- two texts to write about, labelled Text A and Text B
- the inclusion of an extract from each of the two texts printed on the question paper
- a brief explanation of the texts in the anthology from which the extracts have been drawn
- an instruction to compare and contrast how the writer(s) and/or speaker(s) express their ideas about a specific aspect of Paris
- an instruction to refer to both texts in answers.

A note on the choice of extracts

Although the question structure will remain consistent, the combination of the two texts chosen will vary from year to year. Any two of the anthology texts could be selected for comparison with no combinations impossible. Shorter extracts from a whole text contained in the *AQA Anthology: Paris* will be selected.

Extracts will be chosen that allow students to make a range of comparative points. The [specimen paper](#) provides examples of suitable lengths of texts for this question.

What's the task asking students to do?

The command words 'compare and contrast' mean that students should identify similarities and differences between the two texts they are given. The focus of the specimen question is on 'people living in or visiting Paris' but there are many other possible comparative ideas provided by the material in the anthology.

Students' classroom study of the *AQA Anthology: Paris* will have been focused on a 'detailed exploration of the ubiquitous nature of narrative and systematic study of the representation of place' (outlined in the [specification](#) section 4.1.2). In studying, thinking and writing about the anthology prior to the exam, students will have considered:

- the ways in which writers and speakers present places, societies, people and events
- the metaphorical nature of representation: the ways that narrative itself can sometimes be seen as a personal journey for writers and speakers
- the influence of contextual factors such as time period, race, social class and gender on the content and focus of narratives
- the affordances and limitations of different media
- different generic conventions and different purposes for communicating ideas and viewpoints about travel, people and place
- how people and their relationships are realised through point of view, attitude, specific registers, physical descriptions, speech and thought.

In responding to the exam question, students will need to apply concepts and use methods, as appropriate, to explore the extracts. The examples they choose will enable them to illustrate their understanding of these by drawing on the field of Stylistics. They will need to draw on appropriate language levels (eg grammar, lexis) and use correct and relevant terminology for the concepts they discuss, the methods they use and features they discuss.

Students will need to demonstrate an understanding of the contextual factors influencing the production and reception of the texts in question. Clearly comparing and contrasting how the writers and speakers in these extracts present Paris will require consideration of the texts' contexts of production and reception; students will be required to evaluate the different factors associated with mode and the use of particular genre conventions in the extracts.

How is the question assessed?

This question assesses the following AOs:

A01 (15 marks)

Using terminology, applying concepts and methods, expressing and presenting ideas. This AO1 rewards students' ability to apply concepts and methods from integrated linguistic and literary study to literary and non-literary material. AO1 also rewards the ability to maintain an academic style throughout the essay.

A03 (15 marks)

Context. This relates to students' ability to explore the significance and the influence of contextual factors on the production and reception offered by different genres and text types, and examine why writers and speakers choose to communicate using various forms.

A04 (10 marks)

Connections. This relates to students' ability to make connections between texts, exploring their similarities and differences in the light of how the writers and speakers represent place.

How to write a question for section A

Some obvious points of comparison between texts will emerge as students read through the anthology and it would be a useful exercise to encourage them to make connections and construct some of their own practice questions.

1. Choose a comparative focus.
2. Choose two texts that illustrate this focus and choose an extract from each text of a suitable length.
3. Use the framing of the specimen question as a guide to constructing your question. See below:

Read Text A and Text B, printed below.

Text A is an extract from **(insert text details)**.

Text B is an extract from **(insert text details)**.

Compare and contrast how the writer(s) and/or speaker(s) of these texts express their ideas about **(insert comparative focus)**.

You should refer to both texts in your answer.

Teaching idea

- Encourage students to make a list of themes, points of comparison/links between texts that they see emerging as they read through the anthology.
- Find suitable texts for each comparative focus.
- Compare texts according to mode, genre and other contextual factors.
- Familiarise students with the way Question 1 is constructed and task them with creating some of their own questions.

How to write an accompanying mark scheme

The generic marking grid will remain consistent from year to year, although clearly the indicative content section will change to reflect the extracts chosen. The [specimen mark scheme](#) provides an example of how the indicative content for this question will be organised (see pages 8 and 9).

There will be indicative content for each assessment objective, organised as follows:

A01

A separate list of indicative content points for each text, including likely/possible **language features** (at any analytical level) that students could comment on. In particular, those features which are foregrounded should be highlighted here. In addition, reference should be made to features that highlight the **distinctive ways that places, people and societies are represented** to allow for students to meet A04.

A03

A list of possible contextual points, addressing all of the following:

- factors associated with mode
- generic conventions, including different ways of storytelling afforded by different genres
- the influence of contextual factors (production and reception) on the negotiation and shaping of meaning.

(Note that the above points do not have to be equally-weighted; the balance will depend on the text).

A04

A list of possible similarities and differences, which should draw attention to how students could compare and contrast:

- key/foregrounded language features
- aspects of mode, genre, audience, purpose and context.

Students should explore **connections** in the context of an overarching focus on the **representation of place**, so indicative content should also include comment on any of the aspects/areas of representation identified for AO1.

Teaching idea

- Encourage students to make a list of themes, points of comparison/links between texts that they see emerging as they read through the anthology.
- Find suitable texts for each comparative focus.
- Compare texts according to mode, genre and other contextual factors.
- Familiarise students with the way Question 1 is constructed and task them with creating some of their own questions.

Section B: Imagined Worlds

In this section students answer one question from a choice of two on their chosen prose set text. This section of the exam is open book which means they are allowed to take a clean (unannotated) copy of their novel into the exam with them.

Look at how questions 2 – 9 from the [sample assessment materials](#) are constructed. In the specimen question below we have *italicised in red* those parts of the question that will remain consistent from year to year:

Read the extract printed below. This is from the section of the novel where the Creature tells Frankenstein about his feelings when he first experiences the world.

Explore the significance of the Creature's speech and thought in the novel. You should consider:

- *the presentation of the Creature's speaking and thinking in the extract below and at different points of the novel*
- *the use of fantasy elements in constructing a fictional world.*

You can see from the specimen question that there will always be:

- an extract from the novel with an explanation of where it occurs in the narrative
- an instruction to 'explore the significance of' a particular aspect of the novel
- one bullet point instructing students to consider the presentation of this particular aspect within the given extract and at other points in the novel
- one bullet point that instructs students to consider 'the use of fantasy elements in constructing a fictional world'.

More on the choice of extracts

The lengths of extracts in the specimen question paper provide examples of what can be expected in future papers. Extracts will always provide students with plenty of opportunity to explore the writer's narrative techniques.

What's the task asking students to do?

Students' classroom study will have been focused on an exploration of the imagined world of their text, which may be characterised by either: unusual narratives, narrators and/or events (outlined in the [specification](#) section 4.1.3). They will have considered the key aspects of the text which place it in particular contexts of production and reception and analysed the language choices made by the writer in order to study:

- point of view
- characterisation
- presentation of time and space/place
- narrative structure.

Students will need to use concepts and apply methods, as appropriate, to explore the extract and other points in the novel. The examples they choose to consider will enable them to illustrate their understanding by drawing on the field of Stylistics. They will need to draw on appropriate language levels (eg grammar, lexis) and use correct and relevant terminology.

How is this question assessed?

This question assesses the following AOs:

A01 (10 marks)

Apply concepts and methods from integrated linguistic and literary study as appropriate, using associated terminology and coherent written expression.

This rewards students' ability to apply concepts and methods from integrated linguistic and literary study to prose fiction, and, specifically, to the analysis of a specific narrative technique. AO1 also rewards the ability to maintain an academic style throughout the essay.

A02 (10 marks)

Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in texts.

This relates to students' ability to examine the ways that meanings are shaped in their chosen text through the selection and exploration of relevant parts of the novel in response to a specific focus.

A03 (15 marks)

Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which texts are produced and received.

This relates to students' ability to explore their chosen novel as part of a wider literary genre (fantasy). It also rewards students' ability to evaluate the influence of contextual factors (social, historical, biographical, literary) on the production and interpretation of their chosen text.

How to write a question for section B

In order to identify possible question focuses, consider the key concepts and the specific subject content for Imagined Worlds.

1. Compile a list of question topics – ones that can be exemplified at different points in the novel.
2. Choose short extracts to use with these topics (or task students with finding their own extracts).
3. Use the framing of the specimen question as a guide to constructing your question:

Read the extract printed below. This is from the section of the novel where **(insert relevant context within the novel)**. Explore the significance of **(insert question focus)**. You should consider:

- the presentation of **(insert question focus)** in the extract below and at different points of the novel
- the use of fantasy elements in constructing a fictional world.

How to write an accompanying mark scheme

The generic marking grid will remain consistent from year to year, although clearly the indicative content section will change to reflect the question focus and extract. The [specimen mark scheme](#) provides an example of how the indicative content for this question will be organised (pages 14 - 24).

There will be indicative content for each assessment objective.

A01

A list of possible linguistic points, including likely/possible **language features** (at any analytical level) that students could comment on. Reference should be made to **narrative techniques**, where relevant, so as to allow for students to meet the criteria of AO2 (analysis of narrative techniques and authorial craft).

A02

A list of possible **analytical/interpretative points**, which should highlight some of the key themes/interpretations of the focus extract as well as interpretative comment on any of the techniques identified for AO1.

A03

A list of possible **contextual points**.

In addition to the above, there will be a list of possible choices of other extracts from the novel that students may consider (with a note that the examiner must be prepared to credit other valid choices).

Teaching idea

1. Pair students and give them a key extract from the text. Ask each pair to create a question and accompanying mark scheme (using the extract provided).
2. Students swap their question with another pair and plan a response – choosing other points in the novel to also consider. Make links between AO1 and AO2 – write one or two paragraphs.
3. Students self or peer assess each other's responses using the mark scheme produced.
4. Share all the questions and mark schemes created by the class so that students can make use of them when preparing for their exam.

Section C: Poetic Voices

In this section, students answer one question from a choice of two on their chosen poetry set text. This section of the exam is open book, which means that they are allowed to take a clean copy of the *AQA Poetic Voices Anthology* into the exam with them.

Look at how the relevant questions from the [specimen assessment materials](#) are constructed. In the specimen question below we have *italicised in red* those parts of the question that will remain consistent from year to year:

Examine how Donne *presents* views about relationships between lovers *in* 'The Sun Rising' *and one other poem of your choice.*

You can see from the specimen question that there will always be:

- an instruction to examine how the poet presents a particular idea or aspect of their poetry
- a reference to one named poem that students must write about
- an instruction to choose one other poem by the same poet (from the anthology) to write about.

What's the task asking students to do?

Students' classroom study of their chosen poems will have been focused on the nature and function of poetic voice in the telling of events and the presentation of people (outlined in the [specification](#), section 4.1.4). They will have considered the role of language in the construction of perspective and explored and analysed:

- the presentation of time: understanding the past, reviewing past experiences, the manipulation of time
- the importance of place: locations and memories, the ways in which these are captured in voice(s), and their effects on individuals
- how people and their relationships are realised through point of view, attitude, specific registers, physical descriptions, speech and thought
- the presentation of events through the poet's selection of material, the use of narrative frames and other poetic techniques.

Students will need to explore how the poet presents particular ideas in the given poem and choose another poem that also exemplifies these ideas. There is no instruction to compare the two poems. As with the other tasks on this paper, students will need to use concepts and apply methods as appropriate to explore the two poems. The examples they choose to consider will enable them to illustrate their understanding by drawing on the field of Stylistics. They will need to draw on appropriate language levels (eg grammar, lexis) and use correct and relevant terminology.

How is this question assessed?

This question assesses the following AOs:

A01 (15 marks)

Apply concepts and methods from integrated linguistic and literary study as appropriate, using

associated terminology and coherent written expression.

This rewards students' ability to apply concepts and methods from integrated linguistic and literary study to poetry and, specifically, to the construction of poetic voice and the presentation of time, place, people, and events. AO1 also rewards the ability to maintain an academic style throughout the essay.

A02 (10 marks)

Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in texts. This relates to students' ability to examine the ways that meanings are shaped through the selection and exploration of relevant sections of poems in response to a specific focus.

How to write a question for section C

In order to identify question focuses, consider the key concepts that underpin the specification (genre, narrative, point of view, register, representation and literariness) and the specific subject content for Poetic Voices. Select poems from the AQA *Anthology: Poetic Voices* that will allow students to answer the various question focuses.

Teaching idea

- Compile a list of question topics – ones that can be exemplified in at least two poems.
- Ask students to choose the poems that best exemplify the topics.
- Use the framing of the specimen question as a guide to constructing your question:

Examine how (insert poet) presents (insert question focus) in (insert given poem) and one other poem of your choice.

How to write an accompanying mark scheme

The generic marking grid will remain consistent from year to year, although clearly the indicative content section will change to reflect the question focus and choice of poems. The [specimen mark scheme](#) provides an example of how the indicative content for this question will be organised (see pages 28 – 35).

There will be indicative content for each assessment objective, organised as follows:

A01

A list of possible linguistic points on the given poem, including likely/possible **language features** (at any analytical level) that students could comment on. In particular, those features which are foregrounded should be highlighted here. In addition, reference should be made to features that represent **distinctive ways that poetic voice might be constructed** so as to allow students to meet the criteria for AO2 (analysis of the construction of poetic voice and authorial craft).

There will be a list of possible poems for discussion that students may choose (with a note that examiners must be prepared to credit other valid choices).

A02

A list of possible **analytical/interpretative points**, which should highlight some of the key themes/interpretations of the focus poems as well as interpretative comment on any of the techniques identified for AO1.

Teaching idea

- Pair students and give them a poem to consider. Ask each pair to create a question (using the poem provided).
- Students swap their question with another pair and prepare a response – together with an accompanying mark scheme.
- Students self or peer assess each other's responses using the mark schemes produced.
- Share all the questions and mark schemes created by the class so that students can make use of them when preparing for their exam.

Paper 2: Exploring Conflict

As detailed in the [specification](#) (section 4.2), the aim of the area of study examined in this paper is to introduce students to how language choices help to construct ideas of conflict between people, and between people and their societies.

Section A: Writing about Society

In this section, students answer the two compulsory questions on their chosen set text. The first question asks students to produce a piece of re-creative writing and the second question asks students to write a critical commentary on their transformation.

There are four choices of questions, one for each set text:

- Question 1: *Into the Wild*, by Jon Krakauer
- Question 3: *The Suspicions of Mr Whicher*, by Kate Summerscale
- Question 5: *The Great Gatsby*, by F Scott Fitzgerald
- Question 7: *The Kite Runner*, by Khaled Hosseini.

This section of the exam is open book, which means that students are allowed to take a clean (unannotated) copy of the text into the exam.

As there will be no choice of re-creative writing task for the set text that the students have studied, students will need to practise writing in a variety of registers and from a range of points of view.

With this in mind, as preparation for the exam you may want to write your own questions to help build the students' skills in re-creative writing, as well as their knowledge of the base text.

Look at how Question 1 from the [specimen assessment materials](#) is constructed. In the specimen question below we have *italicised in red* those parts that will remain consistent from year to year.

Into the Wild – Jon Krakauer

Read the opening of Chapter One

from

'Jim Gallien had driven four miles out of Fairbanks'

to

'he couldn't wait to head out there and get started'.

This describes the meeting between Gallien, a working man travelling to Anchorage, and Alex, who is hitchhiking.

Recast the base text into an account that Gallien might give to his wife later that evening.

In your transformation you should consider:

-
- Gallien’s perspective of the meeting, his views on Alex and attitudes towards travellers
 - Gallien’s relationship with his wife in the way he conveys his recent experience.

You should write about 300 words.

You can see from the specimen questions that there will always be:

- a specific section to use as a starting point for their recast that identifies the chapter, as well as the start and end points of the chosen extract
- a brief summary of the content of the extract
- the use of the command word ‘recast’
- additional guidance in the form of bullet points, which will have been carefully selected and worded to give further direction to the students’ writing. Note the wording of the instruction ‘you should consider’
- guidance on the word count.

Please note that although there is no penalty for either writing too little or too much, students should be guided by the suggested word count in order to allow them time to plan and to compose their recast, as well as allowing them sufficient time to prepare and write the accompanying commentary.

What’s the task asking students to do?

The re-creative writing task requires students to reconfigure events in the base text from the point of view of either an **included participant** (a character explicitly mentioned in the base text) or an **excluded participant** (a character not explicitly mentioned but whose existence can be assumed).

To exemplify this distinction, in the specimen question on *Into the Wild*, students are asked to recast the events from the perspective of the **included** participant Gallien. But they could have been asked to recast the events from the point of view of an **excluded** participant such as another driver on the road out of Fairbanks who might have seen Alex. Note that the focus of this question is on reconfiguring events (in the base text) from a **different point of view**, therefore, students are asked to recast the text into an ‘account’ rather than being given a specific genre. This allows them to make re-creative choices in order to demonstrate the ways that **writers present people, their points of view and their relationships with others.**

In their classroom study, they will have looked at how writers:

- shape the narrative structure and present events/time/places
- reveal the speech and thought processes of the characters and narrator(s)
- use situations of conflict to express ideas about societies and their values.

In addition, students will have developed the skills to adapt and shape the original material (the base text) to respond to different re-creative tasks. These skills include awareness of:

- the nature of monologue and dialogue
- how changing point of view, genre, context, purpose, audience or mode can re-shape meanings
- how undeveloped aspects of the narrative and characterisation might be developed further
- the importance of specific moments in time or descriptions of place.

This information is outlined in [specification](#) section 4.2.2.

The unchanging nature of the task – to offer an account – still allows students flexibility in their own re-creative choices. For example, in response to this specimen question on *Into the Wild*, a student could choose to write in the first person, one of the third person modes, have it part written, part spoken, include dialogue etc. Students should make their own representational decisions around the use of dialogue, speech, narrative modes and so on, whilst producing a recast text that is within the same broad genre as the base text, ie prose fiction/non-fiction.

How is the re-creative task assessed?

The only assessment objective awarded for the re-creative writing task is AO5: Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English to communicate in different ways. It's worth 25 marks and three distinct strands are being assessed:

- flair and originality
- sustained use of style
- convincing use of base text.

How to write a question for section A

In order to identify possible question focuses, consider the key concepts and the specific subject content for Writing about Society.

Compile a list of recast options that explore the perspectives of different included and excluded participants at different points of the text.

Choose an extract start and finish point in the text.

Use the framing of the specimen question as a guide to constructing your own question:

1. Provide instructions that direct students to a specific extract in the base text.
Read the section of **(insert chapter)** from **'(insert starting point of chosen section)'** to **'(insert end point of chosen section)'**.
2. Summarise the chosen extract in one sentence.
This describes **(insert summary)**.
3. Use the framing of the specimen question as a guide to constructing the task.
Recast the base text into an account that **(insert point of view chosen – character name)** might give to **(insert audience chosen)** about **(insert the focus of the event or interaction)**.
4. Provide a couple of bullet points that help the students focus on the content or attitudes/feelings of the participants.
In your transformation you should consider:
 - **(insert participant's perspective/views on/attitude to/impressions of/relationship with)**
 - **(insert participant's perspective/views on/attitude to/impressions of/relationship with)**.

How to write an accompanying mark scheme

The generic marking grid will remain consistent from year to year, although clearly the indicative content section will change to reflect the extracts chosen. An example of how indicative content will be organised is provided below for *Into the Wild*.

Please note that this is not an exhaustive or prescriptive list and simply offers advice to examiners of what students might offer in their transformations.

Some possible content/stylistic points:

- Presentational choices – point of view, use of dialogue and speech and thought presentation, narration, characterisation, setting and genre etc.
- Gallien’s presenting of the sequence of events to his wife
- Gallien’s impressions of Alex during the journey
- Gallien’s concerns about Alex – Alex’s supplies, his knowledge of the area and survival skills, his lack of contact with family etc.
- the relationship between husband and wife
- Gallien’s wife’s possible responses to the situation – her husband’s picking up of hitchhikers and associated dangers, sympathy (or not) for the young man and so on
- Gallien’s register given the audience of his wife.

The critical commentary

Questions 2, 4, 6 and 8 ask students to write a commentary on their recast.

Look at how Question 2 from the [sample assessment materials](#) is constructed. In the specimen question below we have *italicised in red* those parts that will remain consistent from year to year.

Write a commentary explaining the decisions you have made in transforming the base text for this new account and the effects of reshaping Summerscale’s original description.

In your commentary you should:

- *consider how you have used language to shape your intended meaning*
- *demonstrate the connections between the base text and your transformed text*
- *structure your writing clearly to express your ideas.*

You should write about 400 words.

As you can see from the specimen question, the wording will be consistent for each series and for each set text.

What’s the task asking students to do?

Students need to evaluate their own writing, explaining their language choices and analysing their intentions in reshaping the writer’s original material (the base text). Through this they will demonstrate conceptual understanding of the choices and the effects created, as well as an understanding of the original text. They might explore why the original writers made the choices in order to present characters, scenes and events and how these had to be adapted for the student’s own text (see [specification](#), page 23).

The bullet points direct students explicitly to the assessment objectives being assessed:

-
- **AO2:** consider how they have used language to shape their intended meaning
 - **AO4:** demonstrate the connections between the base text and their transformed text
 - **AO5:** structure their writing clearly to express their ideas.

Advice about the suggested word count reminds students that the commentary carries a higher weighting than the re-creative writing task. This is because the commentary assesses their knowledge and understanding of the base text (one of their set texts) and because the skill of evaluating and analysing their own text is important to the specification.

How is the critical commentary assessed?

Each student's commentary will be individual and so no indicative content can be supplied.

A02 (15 marks)

Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in texts.

This AO rewards students for their **identification of language features used, analysis and evaluation of decisions made to shape the text**. In their discussion of language features, students might also consider ways in which they have used narrative strategies (eg speech and thought representation, characterisation) in creating their new text. These would be considered within the broader context of 'language' and their identification and interpretation should be credited for AO2.

A04 (10 marks)

Explore connections across texts, informed by linguistic and literary concepts and methods.

This AO rewards students' for **making connections** (similarities and differences) between their own decisions as writers and the decisions and effects achieved by the writers of the base text. They need to refer specifically to the nature of the base text in order to achieve a comparison and target A04.

A05 (5 marks)

Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English to communicate in different ways.

This AO rewards students' **organisation** of the commentary and **accuracy** of writing.

Teaching idea

- In pairs, students choose a particular chapter and make a list of the included participants and the excluded participants.
- Ask them to summarise the key events in the chapter and then suggest possible recasting activities based on characters and the events presented.
- Complete short writing activities, where students take some interesting sentences from their chapter and 'intervene' with these by changing point of view, specific language choices and registers associated with a new character etc.

Each student in their pair could choose the same sentence(s) and intervene individually. They could then swap their mini-recasts to see how they have intervened differently.

- Ask them to explain the different effects of their own and/or their partner's language choices.

For further guidance on re-creative writing see our [Writing about Society: Textual Intervention](#) guide on the website.

Section B: Dramatic Encounters

In this section, students answer one question from a choice of two on their chosen drama set text. This section of the exam is open book, which means that students are allowed to take a clean (unannotated) copy of their set text into the exam.

Look at how Question 9 from the [specimen assessment](#) materials is constructed. In the specimen question below we have *italicised in red* those parts of the question that will remain consistent from year to year.

Othello – William Shakespeare

Refer to Act 1, Scene 3,

beginning

‘Wilt thou be fast to my hopes’ and

ending

‘must bring monstrous birth to the world’s light’.

This interaction occurs near the end of the scene. Iago is persuading Roderigo to follow him to Cyprus.

Referring to these lines and other parts of the play, explore how and why Shakespeare *presents* (or *uses*) manipulative behaviour *at different points in the play*.

You can see from the specimen question that there will always be:

- an extract from the play, clearly identifying where this is taken from in the play through Acts, Scenes or page numbers (depending on the playwright’s own separation of the dramatic text)
- an explanation of where it occurs in the play and a brief summary of the content
- an instruction for the question focus, ie manipulative behaviour. (Questions will generally be worded in an open way to allow students to focus on characters and interactions other than just the characters involved, but some questions could be slightly narrower in focus. For example, one of the specimen questions for *A Streetcar Named Desire* asks students to focus on ‘marital conflict’ which will restrict their choices of extracts.)
- an instruction for students to select their own extracts to explore from ‘different points in the play’.

More on the choice of extracts

The length of extracts in the specimen question paper provides examples of what can be expected in future papers. These are offered as a **starting point** for thinking about how students can address the question focus through exploring this and their own chosen extracts. The selection of different points in the play to discuss and analyse is a compulsory aspect of the question and students will be penalised if they *only* use the starting extract.

What's the task asking students to do?

Students will have explored in their classroom study the ways that conflicts are presented, the meanings that can be inferred from the language use and the contextual reasons for these conflicts (outlined in [the specification](#), section 4.2.4). As part of their study, students will also have analysed areas relevant to the study of drama and dramatic discourse, including how playwrights:

- represent natural speech features
- use language to create distinctively different characters
- show characters asserting power and positioning others via their language and behaviour
- use the idea of conflict to create dynamic narratives and address the wider themes of the play.

In responding to the exam question, students will need to apply concepts and use methods as appropriate to explore the extract and other points in the play. The examples they choose to consider will enable them to illustrate their understanding by drawing on the field of Stylistics. They will need to draw on appropriate language levels (eg grammar, lexis) and use correct and relevant terminology for the concepts they discuss, the methods they use and features they discuss.

How is this question assessed?

This question assesses the following AOs:

A01 (15 marks)

Apply concepts and methods from integrated linguistic and literary study as appropriate, using associated terminology and coherent written expression.

This rewards students' ability to apply literary and non-literary concepts and methods to the study of a dramatic text. AO1 also rewards the ability to maintain an academic style throughout the essay. It can be broken down into these areas:

- using terminology
- selection and analysis at different/appropriate language levels
- expression and presentation of ideas.

A02 (20 marks)

Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in texts.

This relates to students' ability to examine the ways that meanings are shaped in the dramatic text through the selection and exploration of relevant sections in response to a specific focus. It can be broken down into these areas:

- an ability to interpret and evaluate the question focus
- selection of appropriate detail
- the construction of identities and relationships and an analysis of authorial craft.

A03 (10 marks)

Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which texts are produced and received.

This relates to students' ability to explore the ways that dramatic conflict is presented through particular genre conventions. It also rewards students' ability to evaluate the influence of contextual

factors (social, historical, biographical, literary) on the production and interpretation of their chosen text. It can be broken down into these areas:

- generic conventions of drama
- the influence of contextual factors (production and reception) on the negotiation and shaping of meaning.

How to write a question for section B

In order to identify possible question focuses, consider the key concepts and the specific subject content for Dramatic Encounters.

Compile a list of question topics relating to conflict – ones that can be exemplified at different points in the play.

Choose a starting extract to use with these topics.

1. Provide instructions that direct students to a specific extract in the base text.
Refer to **(identify Act and Scene or page numbers)** as relevant to the set text, beginning **(first few words of starting extract)** and ending **(last few words of starting extract)**.
2. Provide a brief summary of the chosen extract.
This interaction occurs **(give a brief summary of where the extract occurs in the scene/play and of the content of the extract)**.
3. Use the framing of the sample question as a guide to constructing the task.
Referring to these lines and other parts of the play, explore how and why **(author)** **(presents/uses)** **(insert question focus)** at different points in the play.

How to write an accompanying mark scheme

The generic marking grid will remain consistent from year to year, although clearly the indicative content will change to reflect the question focus and extracts chosen. The [specimen mark scheme](#) provides an example of how the indicative content for this question will be organised (see pages 16-32).

There will be indicative content for each assessment objective, organised as follows:

A01

A separate list of indicative content points for each text, including likely/possible **language features** (at any analytical level) that students could comment on. In particular, those features which are foregrounded should be highlighted. In addition, reference should be made to the following **dramatic features and strategies for showing interaction** where relevant, to allow students to meet the criteria for AO2 (analysis of the construction of identity, relationships and authorial craft more generally):

- the ways in which dramatic monologue and dialogue are organised and presented
- the use of different speech acts associated with particular characters and in interaction
- conversational strategies that are given to characters to shape identity, for example, turn-taking, exchange structures, co-operation, im/politeness strategies, inference and implication

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- distinctive personal vocabularies, speech patterns and registers given to characters
 - other ways of constructing identities, presenting conflict and highlighting tensions between characters and the fictional worlds they inhabit, for example through physical descriptions, stage directions and orthographical conventions.

A02

A list of possible **analytical/interpretative points**, highlighting some possible key ideas and focuses of the extract, and the wider play, that highlight how we would expect students to select appropriate material (both from the extract and more widely in the play) in line with the question focus and to use precise and accurate terminology in the service of literary criticism. It should also include interpretative comment *where possible* on the techniques identified for AO1.

A03

A list addressing all of these bullet points with the understanding that these are often inter-related. For example, if studying *Othello*, students could address AO3 by discussing:

- how **specific dramatic conventions and the affordances of the stage** are used. For example:
 - soliloquy
 - asides
 - use of theatrical space
 - stage directions.
- social, historical, political, and literary influences on the **production and reception** of the play. For example:
 - relevant points from the study of early Jacobean theatre
 - Shakespearean tragedy
 - revenge and domestic tragedies
 - the roles of men and women in society
 - relevant references to specific literary critical and non-academic readings from a variety of theoretical lenses and stances
 - any re-writings/adaptations.

Please note that 'literary-critical' interpretations are **not** privileged over others and there is no need for students to necessarily learn and quote named critics.

Teaching idea

(A3 or poster paper required)

- Small groups of students (approximately 4) work together to suggest 4 – 5 questions based around conflict in their set play.
- Each group passes on their ideas to another group who suggest starting extracts for these questions.
- The sheet with questions and starting extracts is passed on again.
- This group selects one of the questions for further development. They discuss together the question/starting extract and suggest other points in the play, as well as the ways that they can interpret the question (focusing on AO2 – analysis/interpretation).
- Groups then divide into pairs and each pair analyses two extracts in more detail – focusing on AO1 detail to support their interpretations. They feed back their analysis to the other pair and discuss how they could link in AO3 by identifying genre conventions in their extracts and also contexts of production and reception that would be interesting to explore. (The latter could be

supported by a small pack of short extracts from literary criticism, reviews of productions, reader comments on blogs, forums and websites).

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