AS
ENGLISH LITERATURE B
7716/1B

Paper 1B Literary genres: Drama: Aspects of comedy

Mark scheme

June 2024

Version: 1.0 Final

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 Examiner.

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

Level of response marking instructions

Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level. There are marks in each level.

Before you apply the mark scheme to a student's answer read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. You can then apply the mark scheme.

Step 1 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer. With practice and familiarity you will find that for better answers you will be able to quickly skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme.

When assigning a level you should look at the overall quality of the answer and not look to pick holes in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level, ie if the response is predominantly level 3 with a small amount of level 4 material it would be placed in level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the level 4 content.

Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help with this. The exemplar materials used during standardisation will help. There will be an answer in the standardising materials which will correspond with each level of the mark scheme. This answer will have been awarded a mark by the Lead Examiner. You can compare the student's answer with the example to determine if it is the same standard, better or worse than the example. You can then use this to allocate a mark for the answer based on the Lead Examiner's mark on the example.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points. Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the Indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

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 8) 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 9. 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. Use the Model Marked Script for guidance.

The following annotation is available for use on e-Marker 2:

Annotation Name	Toolbar Image	Details	Examples of Use on Script	Y/N
Annotation Type: Stamp				
Correct		Toolbar Tooltip: Correct		Y
Seen		Toolbar Tooltip: Seen		Y
NotRelevant		Toolbar Tooltip: Not Relevant		Y
Red Line		Toolbar Tooltip: Red Line		Y
Green Empty Comment		Toolbar Tooltip: Green Empty Comment No Default Text - text shown in screenshot was typed into annotation by user	Example Text	Y
AssessObjective1		Toolbar Tooltip: Assessment Objective 1		Y
Repetition		Toolbar Tooltip: Repetition		Y
Vague		Toolbar Tooltip: Vague		Y
Development		Toolbar Tooltip: Development		Y
SomethingHere		Toolbar Tooltip: Something here		Y
Unfocused		Toolbar Tooltip: Unfocused		Y
UnclearExpression		Toolbar Tooltip: Unclear expression		Y
LackOfClarity		Toolbar Tooltip: Lack of Clarity		Y
FactualInaccuracy		Toolbar Tooltip: Factual Inaccuracy		Y
PartiallyMadePoint		Toolbar Tooltip: Partially made point		Y
Text		Toolbar Tooltip: Needing textual support		Y

17. Please remember that scripts can go back to students, so although your audience is a senior examiner, you must express yourself temperately when writing in the comment boxes.

The assessment objectives and their significance

18. 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	• 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	• perceptive exploration of connections across literary texts arising out of generic study	
	AO3	• 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	• perceptive understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task • assured engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used	
	AO1	• 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	• 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	• logical and consistent exploration of connections across literary texts arising out of generic study	
	AO3	• 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	• thorough understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task • thorough engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used	
	AO1	• 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	

Band 3 **Straightforward/ Relevant 11–15 marks** '**Straightforward**' work is shown when students make their ideas in relation to the task clearly known. '**Relevant**' work is shown when students are focused on the task and use detail in an appropriate and supportive way.	AO5	• straightforward engagement with the debate set up in the task	This band is characterised by **straightforward** and **relevant** work where the student's response to the task is clear and intelligible. At the top of the band students will demonstrate consistent **straightforward** understanding in the course of their argument. Ideas will be developed **relevantly**. At the bottom of the band there will be flashes of **relevant** understanding with evidence of **straightforward** thinking.
	AO4	• explores connections across literary texts arising out of generic study in a straightforward way	
	AO3	• straightforward understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task • relevant connections between those contexts and the genre studied	
	AO2	• straightforward understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task • relevant engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used	
	AO1	• 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	
Band 2 **Simple/Generalised 6–10 marks** '**Simple**' work is shown when students write in an unelaborated and basic way in relation to the task. '**Generalised**' work is shown when students write without regard to particular details.	AO5	• simple and generalised response to the debate set up in the task	This band is characterised by **simple** and **generalised** work which is mainly linked to the task. 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. At the bottom of the band there will be inconsistency, but the beginnings of a **simple** and **generalised** understanding.
	AO4	• simple exploration of connections across literary texts arising out of generic study	
	AO3	• simple understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task • generalised connections between those contexts and the genre studied	
	AO2	• simple understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task • generalised engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used	
	AO1	• 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	

| Band 1 **Largely irrelevant/largely misunderstood/largely inaccurate** **1–5 marks** '**Largely irrelevant**' work is shown when students write in an unclear way with only occasional reference to what is required by the question. '**Largely misunderstood**' and '**largely inaccurate**' work is shown when knowledge of the text is insecure, hazy and often wrong. | | • 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 | 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. 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. At the bottom of the band there will be no connection with the task; the writing will be hard to follow and **irrelevant**. |
| **0 marks** | | No marks for response when nothing is written or where response has no connection to the text(s) or task. | |

| 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 play as a whole.

You should consider the following in your answer:

- the setting and mood of the banquet
- the roles of the women
- other relevant aspects of dramatic comedy.

[25 marks]

Some possible content 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 must necessarily be connected to that 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 other parts of the play it is also legitimate to make more general reference.

Please refer to pages 4–8.

AO5   Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations

With respect to interpretative significances that can be found, there will be a variety of interpretations here in relation to readers and audiences. Some students might comment on the choices made by directors.

Some possible ideas:

- the comedic trajectory of the extract: this is Lucentio and Bianca's wedding banquet and Baptista, Vincentio, Gremio, the merchant who had pretended to be Vincentio, Lucentio, Bianca, Petruchio, and Katherina are all present. The servants Tranio, Grumio, and Biondello are there as well, unifying the cast. Hortensio and the Widow he has quickly married are there too. Lucentio welcomes everyone to the banquet, calls Petruchio and Katherina his brother and sister, and says that all the earlier chaos and confusion is now happily resolved (part of the comedic resolution). At the banquet, matching the wit and dialogue of earlier in the play, the guests at the banquet trade jokes and jibes, with the Widow especially teasing Petruchio for being married to a shrew, offending Katherina. The women then leave
- the contextualisation of the extract: before the scene – the confusion at the end of Act 4 has been solved with the real Vincentio set to be arrested, when the real Lucentio enters with his newly-betrothed Bianca, revealing all to a bewildered Baptista and Vincentio. Lucentio explains, and everything is forgiven by the two fathers; Hortensio has in the meantime married a rich widow. In this final scene of the play, there are thus the three newly-married couples; Bianca and Lucentio, the Widow and Hortensio, and Katherina and Petruchio; after the scene – a good-natured quarrel breaks out amongst the three men about whose wife is the most obedient; Petruchio proposes a wager where each one of them will send a servant to call for their wives, and whichever comes most obediently will have won the wager for her husband; Katherina is the only one of the three who comes, ironically winning the wager for Petruchio. She then hauls the other two wives into the

room, giving a speech on why wives should always obey their husbands
- the expanse and grandeur of Lucentio and Bianca's wedding banquet, as seen in the stage directions and Lucentio's welcome
- Lucentio's summary of the plot and tying together of the couple's differing journeys in the play, matching the structure of dramatic comedy by having multiple marriages
- the banquet's grandeur matching the hope that all difficulties, love pursuits and rivalries have been put behind them by those attending
- the way that Petruchio is in a buoyant and celebratory mood matching the mood of the banquet, eg 'Nothing but sit and sit, and eat and eat!' and the contrast of his banquet with the earlier taming scene
- the way in which this banquet scene quickly develops into witty exchanges between Petruchio and the two women: the Widow and Katherina
- the continued use of Petruchio as a confident and bullish figure, who does not tolerate fools or shrewish women like the Widow, eg 'Now, for my life, Hortensio fears his widow'
- the dramatic importance of the hitherto unseen Widow and the impact of this upon the ending of the play, eg 'He that is giddy thinks the world turns round' – a comment that is a dig at Katherina
- the Widow's loud-mouthed nature; the fact that she is clearly meant to be not the sort of woman any sane Paduan would marry if he had the choice
- the notion that characters (like the Widow) who have not seen Katherina's apparent transformation, continue to heap abuse on her, insulting her for her resistance to male authority, eg 'Right, I mean you'
- the comedic knowledge that Hortensio (who has lusted for Bianca during the play) seemingly marries the Widow very quickly adding humour to both himself and the Widow
- Katherina's reaction and response to the Widow, which seems to be an attack, but also the women's shared understanding of men and the kind of society they operate within
- Hortensio's function as a fool and how he is set up as a comedic figure, but also him already discussing 'a shrewd, ill-favoured wife', and his journey in the play to marry the Widow
- the audience's knowledge that Katherina, in contrast to Bianca and the Widow, is entirely devoted to Petruchio. But it is still possible that she is simply performing the role of a subservient wife, perhaps even in cahoots with Petruchio to win the bet
- the implications of the play as a misogynistic text; the difficulty of Katherina's speech to the other women for modern audiences
- etc.

Students might develop any of the points mentioned above and suggest what meanings arise from those ideas and how audiences might react, for example:

Accept any valid discussion of dramatic methods, any valid interpretations and any valid discussion of contexts which are grounded in the passage and which relate to the play as a whole.

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts

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

- the comedic function of the wedding banquet to draw all of the threads of the play, as well as the three marriages, together
- the comedic role of alternative husbands and wives, as seen in the presentation of Petruchio and Hortensio, and Katherina and the Widow
- the comedic use of a major comedic character as seen in the form of Petruchio, eg his bullish nature and farcical attitude
- the comedic inversion and confusion in the play as seen in the way Petruchio is actually preparing for the bet with the other husbands; perhaps in cahoots with Katherina
- the comedic functions of truthful marriages and false marriages, eg Petruchio and Katherina

compared to Hortensio and the Widow
- the comedic patterning of how events here are a reversal of what happened earlier in the play, eg Petruchio and Katherina's marriage looking like it will be disastrous but is actually successful
- the comedic aspect of farce and absurdity within the scene, as seen in the discussion over husbands and wives
- the comedic misunderstanding as seen between Katherina and the Widow
- the comedic role and function of a foolish husband, as seen in Hortensio
- etc.

AO3   Demonstrate understanding of the significance 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 marriage, husbands and wives in Padua, and how an expensive banquet is a symbol of that
- the economic context of marriage in relation to the eventual marriages of Petruchio and Katherina, and Hortensio and the Widow
- the literary context of Commedia dell'arte in relation to comedic types and situations, eg the way that Hortensio and the Widow are presented
- the gender context in relation to the inequalities between men and women, eg the way Hortensio and Petruchio talk about women and wives
- the context of male attitudes to shrewish wives as seen in this scene and in the title of the play
- 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 banquet scene at the end of the comedy and its significance in terms of resolving the plot, eg the multiple marriages and Shakespeare allowing Hortensio 'pretend' nuptials and a pretence of happiness
- the structural fact that although only a few characters speak at the banquet, they are being observed by many others
- Lucentio's summative language, eg when he talks of 'scapes' (close calls with disaster) and things are now 'overblown' (blown over); his notion that they will now complete the feast with dessert ('close our stomachs off')
- the presentation of some concluding thoughts about wives and shrews in Petruchio and Hortensio's minds; the same concluding thoughts about husbands in the minds of the Widow and Katherina
- the language of witty exchanges between men and women for reasons of gain and control, eg 'Measures my husband's sorrow by his woe./And now you know my meaning'
- the abrupt and pinioned language of the Widow, eg 'Then never trust me, if I be afeard' and 'He that is giddy thinks the world turns round.' (people project their own faults onto others)
- the guarded and pointed responses of Katherina, eg 'A very mean meaning'
- the malapropisms and language puns, eg 'Very well mended. Kiss him for that, good widow' and 'And I am mean, indeed, respecting you'
- Petruchio's enthusiastic language about the banquet in Padua, (eg 'Padua affords nothing but what is kind') and his witty remarks on sex, marriage and wives, (eg 'Conceives by me! How likes Hortensio that?')
- etc.

Given that this is a **closed book** exam, references to other parts of the play may be more generalised than those from the passage.

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 terminology
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid discussion of interpretations, any valid discussion of contexts and any valid discussion of dramatic methods which are grounded in the passage and which relate to the play as a whole.

0	2	*Twelfth Night* **– William Shakespeare**

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

You should consider the following in your answer:

- the presentation of Viola
- the role of Feste
- other relevant aspects of dramatic comedy.

[25 marks]

Some possible content 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 must necessarily be connected to that 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 other parts of the play it is also legitimate to make more general reference.

Please refer to pages 4–8.

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations

With respect to interpretative significances that can be found, there will be a variety of interpretations here in relation to readers and audiences. Some students might comment on the choices made by directors.

Some possible ideas:

- the comedic trajectory of the extract: of all the characters in the play, it is the intuitive and wise Feste who notes that Cesario is in disguise and in this scene he demonstrates his wit by verbally gaming with Cesario, commenting on foolery (how fools fall in love) and noticing 'his' feminine appearance. In so doing, he also mocks Olivia and Orsino; amused by this, Cesario gives him a few coins, but is also worried as to whether the jester has seen through her disguise
- the contextualisation of the extract: this scene comes at a middle point in play; before the scene – Viola is in disguise as Cesario and is a member of Orsino's court; Orsino finds his company appealing and starts to fall in love with him; in the previous act, Malvolio has also been duped into thinking Olivia loves him by Sir Toby Belch and the others; Cesario arrives at Olivia's palace (following Orsino's instructions in Act 2, Scene 4). After the scene – as Feste scurries off, Sir Toby and Sir Andrew appear; then Olivia arrives with Maria. Cesario asks to see her in private; Olivia sends everyone else away
- the development of the comedic inversion through Viola's disguise as Cesario, and its near discovery here; a sense that the disguise has been seen through
- the knowledge that this is building to a major moment in the 'Green World' of comedic confusion in Illyria, where the foolish Olivia is about to declare her love for Cesario
- Viola and Feste's interest in the lives and love stories of Orsino and Olivia; for Viola this is the genuine love she is starting to feel for Orsino; for Feste, this is economic because Orsino and Olivia employ him
- the audience's more detailed engagement with the dramatic irony of knowledge about Viola's

identity; and their knowledge that other characters have sussed the disguise
- the wider hope that Sebastian might have survived the storm and have come ashore elsewhere in Illyria – as seen in the next part of the play
- knowledge that in the original performance conditions, characters such as Viola would be played by boys, making the disguise easier
- Feste's role in showing intellect and ability to know much more about the motivations of characters than they think; his knowledge about love and its wiles
- Feste's role in the understanding of foolery which he partakes of and celebrates, but also which he satirises and notes in others
- the wider dramatic narrative regarding the later appearance of Sebastian and the comedic confusion that follows
- audience laughter and awareness of the possible precariousness of Viola's situation: that her disguise may be 'discovered' or revealed
- the wider link to earlier events and the confusion/misrule on the date of twelfth night itself
- the linkages to other reshaping/disguises in the play, eg Feste and Malvolio
- etc.

Students might develop any of the points mentioned above and suggest what meanings arise from those ideas and how audiences might react, for example:

Accept any valid discussion of dramatic methods, any valid interpretations and any valid discussion of contexts which are grounded in the passage and which relate to the play as a whole.

AO4   Explore connections across literary texts

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

- comedic disorder, as seen in the disguise of Viola, eg how she earlier wished to be presented as a 'eunuch' to Orsino
- comedic inversion, as seen in the confusion caused by Viola's duplicity and her eventual similarity to her twin brother Sebastian
- comedic mirth, laughter, revelry as seen as part of festive comedy, eg the shift from the Old World order into the Green World of Illyria, as well as the later New World, created through multiple marriages
- comedic dressing as in Viola's disguise, eg a woman pretending to be a man in a male-dominated society
- comedic challenge to authority as seen in Viola's disruption of the normal gender order and in Feste's satirical tone
- tragi-comedic feel of the text as seen in the dark edge to the comedy, eg the loneliness and isolation of Feste, the fact that Sebastian may have drowned, linking to other darker themes in the text such as Malvolio's revenge and Sir Andrew's fate
- comedic foils in the form of Feste and Cesario, eg the clown paired with the 'straight-man'
- comedic connections of the extract to the title 'Twelfth Night' and possibly to the alternative title 'What You Will' and as seen in the wider anarchy that exists in the play
- etc.

AO3 Demonstrate understanding of the significance 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 mourning context of both Viola's loss of her twin brother and her empathy with Lady Olivia in relation to the implications of her experiencing a double grief
- the romantic context of both Olivia and Orsino, and how Viola and Sebastian will eventually fit into their lives, providing an eventual solution
- the social and economic context in relation to the interface between nobility and itinerant workers, eg Feste's movement between the two courts, and Cesario's willingness to pay for his services
- the dramatic context in relation to how Shakespeare constructs a foreign world that, in fact, is remarkably English, in terms of festivity and culture, eg the convention of setting comedies in different locations to avoid controversy
- the psychological context as to how Viola in disguise might best function in this new country she has arrived in, and in situations such as this where her disguise is precarious
- the ritual year context in relation to the play being set around the context of Twelfth Night celebrations
- 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 importance of Viola's disguise and then the later confusion with Sebastian
- the structural development of Cesario as a lover in this extract and his presentation to Olivia immediately afterwards
- audience engagement with knowledge about Viola's disguise and the structural effects of this; their enjoyment of sharing Feste's knowledge about her true identity
- the structural build up to the moment where Feste asks for Jove to bring Cesario a beard and 'his' response to it
- the contrast of Viola's enquiring tone, (eg 'Dost thou live by thy tabor?) contrasting with Feste's witty responses ('No, sir, I live by the Church'), but her also giving as good as she gets in return ('They that dally nicely with words may quickly make them wanton')
- the use of a question and response technique within the extract
- Feste's language – full of puns, word-play, double-meanings and irony, eg 'I can yield you none without words, and words are grown so false, I am loath to prove reason with them' and 'and fools are as like husbands as pilchers are to herrings; the husband's the bigger'
- Feste's language of knowledge and education, eg 'Foolery, sir, does walk about the orb like the sun, it shines everywhere' and 'I would play Lord Pandarus of Phrygia, sir, to bring a Cressida to this Troilus'
- Feste's mockery of noble lovers seemingly showing that they are no less foolish than, say, someone like Malvolio, eg 'No, indeed, sir; the Lady Olivia has no folly. She will keep no fool, sir, till she be married'
- Viola's understanding that it must take a certain kind of intelligence to be as good a fool as he is because he tailors his jokes and behaviour to the mood and social class of the people he talks to, and the examples Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Feste, eg 'He must observe their mood on whom he jests,/The quality of persons, and the time'
- etc

Given that this is a **closed book** exam, references to other parts of the play may be more generalised than those from the passage.

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 terminology
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid discussion of interpretations, any valid discussion of contexts and any valid discussion of dramatic methods which are grounded in the passage and which relate to the play as a whole.

| 0 | 3 | *She Stoops to Conquer* – **Oliver Goldsmith** |

Explore the view that the play is just too silly to be enjoyed.

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 ideas 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 must 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 4–8.

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:

- that the ridiculousness of the plot, character and situation is too unbelievable to engage with
- that some of the silly moments of the play are identified, eg the Hardcastle house as an inn, the disguise of Kate, the inability of Young Marlow to speak to marriageable girls, the mummy's boy nature of Tony, the dowry plot, Mrs Hardcastle's pretension, the Crackskull Common carriage ride, Tony's illiteracy but ability to invent an elaborate tale, the pretensions of country people, the servants, the use of the screen, Mrs Hardcastle and the horse pond
- that a comedy such as *She Stoops to Conquer* is plain silly in terms of plot and characterisation and can feel structurally clumsy at times
- that the mistake that the Hardcastle's house is an inn is silly and unbelievable as a plot device, set in place by Tony Lumpkin
- that Tony Lumpkin's 'act' as a local font of knowledge is silly, especially before the intelligence and wit of Hastings and Young Marlow
- that the pretensions and machinations of Mrs Hardcastle are plain silly and may not be seen as comic
- the central metaphor of Kate 'stooping to conquer' is silly and that Young Marlow could surely see through the trick, even if he is a willing participant
- that 'shy' Young Marlow's inability to chat up respectable and marriageable girls is a silly plot device considering the fact that Marlow is fine chatting up other girls at the inn, and therefore is constructed by Goldsmith as having enough confidence already
- that the plot device of the dowry regarding Miss Constance Neville, Tony and Hastings is too farcical and thus silly; it makes the marriage of Miss Neville and Hastings seem a clumsy plot mechanism
- that in a play about servants and their masters, that one of the servants would have told the truth about the real circumstances of the inn and the truth about Kate – to not do so seems silly
- that Goldsmith's comedy arises from the gap between the standards of behaviour the characters regard as proper in polite society, and the more informal behaviours they are prepared to indulge or deploy in settings they deem less constrained by such standards, and this is far less appealing

as a form of dramatic comedy because it is very constrained by the context and social manners of the day – making it appear silly
- that the play has comedic heritage in the form of the comedy of manners but that this kind of comedy makes the plot unrealistic where (despite big social differences) the lovers are paired off, and that, bizarrely and unrealistically, Mrs Hardcastle comes to accept the truth about her dowry
- that much of the silliness is attached to the character of Tony Lumpkin but that his appeal is limited because he is a buffoonish stereotype
- etc.

Some students might consider:

- that silliness is considered part of the way that comedy operates and is essential to it – that the plot, character and situations contribute to this
- that it is fine to say that the play is both silly and enjoyable
- that the mistake that the Hardcastle's house is an inn is a classic gag and has great appeal to an audience
- that Goldsmith constructs Tony Lumpkin as an endearing and convincing local expert who can easily deceive two 'city slickers'/'educated men'
- that the pretensions and machinations of Mrs Hardcastle represent a recognisable type of older woman in comedy
- the central metaphor of Kate 'stooping to conquer' is a logical and simple way of gaining Young Marlow's attention and that this is a simple and gratifying plot device – reflected in the play being structured around it
- that 'shy' Young Marlow's inability to chat up respectable and marriageable girls is a recognisable human trope and is very possible and provides the other half of the central plot of the play
- that the dowry plot has considerable interest and is certainly not silly
- that servants in such situations are remarkably loyal and in some senses 'dishonest' about the truth, but paradoxically this makes them sensible and witty
- that although the comedy arises from the gap between the standards of behaviour the characters regard as proper in polite society, and the more informal behaviours they are prepared to indulge or deploy in settings they deem less constrained by such standards, this is still a clever comedic device
- that such comedies of manners have an important place and position within the genre of dramatic comedy, and that they are always funny
- that the kindlier side of Mr Hardcastle does not permit him to become angrier with his ungrateful guests, but that this does not necessarily make the comedy silly
- that the play has the lovers paired off despite the earlier difficulties, and that Mrs Hardcastle comes to accept the truth about her dowry
- that Tony Lumpkin is not silly and has appeal as a comic mastermind
- etc.

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts

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

- comedic farce as seen in situations in the play, eg Mrs Hardcastle's place as an innkeeper's wife, as seen by Marlow, but also in the actions of Tony
- comedic collision of the classes, eg between Mrs Hardcastle and Marlow and Hastings, and between Marlow and Hastings, and Tony
- comedic naivety and innocence, as seen in Mr and Mrs Hardcastle's ineptness in 'running the inn'
- comedic trickery and manipulation as seen in Tony Lumpkin, Mrs Hardcastle, Kate and Young Marlow
- comedic deceit as seen in the plot and setting of the play, eg the set-up of the house as an inn

- comedic genres as seen in elements of the comedy of manners present in the play
- etc.

AO3 Demonstrate understanding of the significance 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 social context and the expectation of how people should respond to a man and woman of Mr and Mrs Hardcastle's class and status, and when this is undercut and becomes ludicrous, eg Young Marlow's actions towards them
- the gender context in relation to the constraints placed upon women and men within the world of the play, eg Constance Neville and Kate wanting the best marriage, Mrs Hardcastle as a woman in her home trying to do the best thing, Hastings in his haste to marry
- the context of the 'silly' setting, eg how the Hardcastles' home is seen and misunderstood by various characters
- the social context of inns in relation to them being centres for bawdy, ludicrous and comic behaviour, eg the charade is set up in The Three Jolly Pigeons, but then transferred to Mrs Hardcastle's home
- etc.

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:

- Goldsmith's macro-structural plotting of the transition of the Hardcastles' house into an inn and the use of Kate's 'stooping' to catch Young Marlow, tricks which may be viewed as both silly and clever
- the structuring of the sub-plot of the play around the dowry as both silly and comedic offered by Mrs Hardcastle for Constance Neville's marrying of Tony, and its consequent undermining by George Hastings and Tony
- the structural build-up to the comedy/silliness with the initial scenes between the mother's boy Toby, and then his ensnaring of Young Marlow and Hastings in the inn
- the structural use of the Crackskull Common carriage chase at the end of the play to enhance the humour of the comedy of the play, leading to Mrs Hardcastle's confusion, as being either silly or comedic
- the use of the letter as either a silly or necessary comedic device, and Tony's illiterate nature which helps in the confusion of Mrs Hardcastle, and results in her discovering the absconding of Hastings and Constance
- the use of the screen as a device (thus hiding away from the two fathers – Charles Marlow and Hardcastle) to allow Marlow and Kate to express their true feelings; the screen perhaps being seen as unnecessary and silly, but also apt given the rules over relationships in the world of the play
- Goldsmith's recognition and use of the inherent comedy/silliness seen in the notion of the relationship between servants and masters, as seen in the real relationship between Hardcastle and his servants preparing for Young Marlow's arrival, and in the structural patterning of this with Hardcastle as the perceived servant of Young Marlow and Hastings
- the use of disguise by Kate and its implications of her transition into a barmaid and the resultant dialogue and language resulting from this; the silliness that Marlow must not have seen her face very well when he had nervously been talking to her earlier, but also the possibility that he may not have seen her fully
- the boorish language and derogatory observations of Young Marlow and Hastings about the state of the inn and its owners
- the language of surprise used by Mr Hardcastle in how he is rebuffed and ignored by Young Marlow and Hastings; at the same time silly and comedic

- the difference in language expressed by those in the country and those from the city, and the desire of some, such as Mrs Hardcastle, to embrace the city's sophistication, eg 'You can find little entertainment in an obscure corner of the country' and the resultant silliness and comedy over this pretention
- Goldsmith's working up of the Hardcastles as a naïve pair who are unaware of the trickery and silliness of their guests and family members
- the device of Sir Charles Marlow at the end of the play who works to end the silliness and unravel the earlier tricks in the play
- the contrast in language – and inherent silliness – in the way that Mr Hardcastle finds Young Marlow impudent and correspondingly the way that Kate finds his language nervous, eg 'Their impudence confounds me' and 'Was there ever such a sober, sentimental interview?'
- the contrast in language found in Marlow when he is with Kate and when she is disguised as a barmaid and the implications of this on both comedy and silliness, eg 'I forget what I was going to observe' when she is right next to him
- the comedic language of flirtation and unwanted flirtation as seen in the sometimes silly and unworkable relationship between Constance and Tony, eg 'Zounds! How she fidgets and spins out like a Catherine wheel'
- the celebratory language of the characters at the end of the play, but also the lack of this found in the character of Mrs Hardcastle who does not share the jubilation, eg 'Pschaw, pschaw, this is all but the end of a modern novel'
- etc.

Given that this is a **closed book** exam, references to the play may be generalised.

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 terminology
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid discussion of interpretations, any valid discussion of contexts and any relevant integrated comments of dramatic methods that are embedded into the argument.

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

Explore the view that the play is just too silly to be enjoyed.

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 ideas 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 must 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 4–8.

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:

- that the ridiculousness of the plot, characters and situation is too unbelievable to engage with
- that the play does allude to many silly moments and these may be identified in the answer: Jack's disguises, Algernon's identity, the use of devices such as the cigarette case and the handbag, the use of Bunburyism, the responses from Lady Bracknell, the silly coquette feelings of Gwendolen and Cecily, the notion of re-christening, the use of Miss Prism and Dr Chasuble to explain silliness, the way that characters conduct themselves in the world of the play
- that the play is enjoyable even though it is silly and that this is an acceptable response
- that the character types and the society depicted are too silly for audiences because they represent a particular social strata in English society that is alien from the experience and expectations of audiences
- that silly male types, such as John Worthing and Algernon Moncrieff, are figures of fun from a specific class, and represent that class only: its codes, manner of speaking, attitudes towards women and ideas surrounding homosexuality, and sexual and marital deviance
- that silly female types, such as Gwendolen Fairfax and Cecily Cardew, represent many core female values of their class, such as finding the right man to marry, who would be 'earnest' in his philosophy, but that they also carry an inherent duplicity about their own motivations and scheming
- that the character of Lady Bracknell is silly and that she embraces the centrality and 'falseness' of inheritance, class, background and manners
- that the minor characters of the play – such as Lane, Merriman, Chasuble and Miss Prism – all represent silly modes of operating in terms of issues such as servitude, indenture, orphans and identity
- that the society of the play is very specific and of a very particular kind of class which Wilde was satirising and promoting as silly
- that taboo material is often dealt with in a silly way
- that, for example, in the society of the play the silly strategy of 'Bunburyism' has an integral role in the comedy and that the most comic/interesting moments of the play involve the use of 'Bunburyism; the strategy allowing individuals to avoid social constraints, and despite being silly is

still comedic because of this
- that the society operates in a world of silly 'double-standards'
- that the notion of the play's subtitle ('trivial comedy for serious people') alludes to some of its sillier elements
- etc.

Some students might consider:

- that silliness is considered part of the way that comedy operates and is essential to it – that the plot, character and situations contribute to this
- that the character types and the society depicted are not silly and have considerable comedic appeal
- that male types, such as John Worthing and Algernon Moncrieff, are iconic figures, with male (men behaving badly) human traits which are applicable in the society of the play; both the balance of straight and homosexual characters are comedic archetypes which are comedic but not silly
- that female types, such as Gwendolen Fairfax and Cecily Cardew, are comedic but not silly, and that they represent many core female values of the world of the play, such as finding the right man to marry, who would be 'earnest' in his philosophy, but that they also carry characteristics such as the manipulation of events, of marriage and of financial success (women behaving badly) bound up with the comedy of the play
- that the character of Lady Bracknell is not silly but a recognisable type of 'class snob' who is portrayed in a comedic way
- that the minor characters of the play – such as Lane, Merriman, Chasuble and Miss Prism – all represent modes of operating from the world of the play and represent a comedic treatment of servitude, indenture, orphans and identity
- that although the society of the play is very specific, and of a very particular kind of class which Wilde was satirising, such a society is not completely silly
- that by raising issues of how class and homosexuality are viewed in the world of the play, Wilde was doing something comically progressive and not silly
- that, for example, in this society the strategy of 'Bunburyism' has an integral role in the comedy of the play and that the most comic/interesting moments of the play involve the use of 'Bunburyism'; the strategy allowing individuals to avoid social constraints, and is therefore comedic and not silly because of this
- that the society operates in a world of 'double-standards' and that this is a particularly ripe area for comedy to explore that is not always silly
- that the notion of the play's subtitle ('trivial comedy for serious people') has a less silly and more serious side to it
- etc.

AO4   Explore connections across literary texts

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

- comedic satire as seen in the leading of double lives/cover ups – embodied in all the main characters, but also by the wider society of the play, whether silly or comedic
- the comedic critique of society as seen in the strategy of 'Bunburyism' and how this affects the relationships between Jack and Earnest and Gwendolen and Cecily, whether silly or comedic
- comedic disguise, as seen in Jack/Earnest's use of 'Bunburyism'-type strategies, whether this is viewed as an extreme example of silliness or a genuine comedic device
- comedic use of mistaken identity as a comedic concept as seen in the wider structure of the play, recognisably comedic but also possibly regarded as overtly silly
- comedic farce as seen in several elements in the drama, presented both as silly and comedic
- comedic resolution as seen in the unravelling and re-christening – and the exposure of the 'masks'

of disguise, whether silly or recognisably comedic
- etc.

AO3 Demonstrate understanding of the significance 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 marriage context in relation to marrying appropriately and how this is altered and manipulated (and sometimes presented as silly) by characters constructed by Wilde throughout the play
- the gender context in relation to the different agendas of men and women (sometimes silly and sometimes comedic) in the play
- the familial context in relation to relatives and their concerns over lineage and heritage, and how this is subverted or made silly
- the social class context in relation to social obligations, snobbery, and class
- the context of different generations in relation to different attitudes and ideologies, eg the younger generation feel the need to use disguise to avoid the pressures of daily life, and the ongoing comedy and silliness derived from this
- the Late-Victorian context in relation to social manners and 'earnestness' – and how 'Bunburyism' is the opposite to 'earnestness' showing insincerity, and possibly silliness
- etc.

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:

- Wilde's macro-structural plotting of the relationships and marriages of the play which may be viewed as both silly and clever
- the structuring of the background plot of the play around the handbag and Jack (being the long-lost son of Lady Bracknell's sister) as being both silly and comedic
- the initial structural build-up to the comedy/silliness with the initial scenes between Algernon Moncrieff and Jack Worthing regarding 'Bunburyism'
- the structural later use of the Drawing room at the Manor House at Woolton to develop the 'ernest/earnest' theme at the end of the play to enhance the humour of the play, leading to resolution, as being either silly or comedic
- the use of properties such as the cigarette case, perambulator (Miss Prism) and the handbag as either silly or necessary comedic devices, and their impact in the mechanisms of the play
- the use of Jack's brother's death in Paris and Algernon's arrival in disguise in Act Two as Ernest as a device to allow for their deceptions to be exposed; perhaps being seen as unnecessary and silly, but also apt given the rules over relationships and secret identities in the world of the play
- Wilde's recognition and use of the inherent comedy/silliness seen in the notion of the relationship between the major characters and the minor ones, as seen in the silly and comedic behaviours of Dr Chasuble and Miss Prism, but also with the servants Lane and Merriman
- the use of disguise by Jack and Algernon, and the ongoing implications of this in the structure of the play; their disguises being both ludicrous and silly, but also comedic
- the boorish language and fierce observations of Lady Bracknell about others in the play and their silliness, but also her silliness in following the conventions of the day
- the difference in language expressed in Wilde's marshalling together of both the serious and the trivial (the silly), especially in the relationships between Jack and Gwendolen, and between Algernon and Cecily
- the pedantic language of Miss Prism and the idiosyncratic diversions of Dr Chasuble which are used to convey comic and sometimes silly effect
- Wilde's working up of the dandyish pairing of Jack and Algernon, and the witty exchanges between

them; similar pairing and the language of honesty and dishonesty between Cecily and Gwendolen, and the silliness of this
- the language of mockery within the play which seeks to poke fun at social custom in the late Victorian period, coupled with Wilde's satire of the well-rounded play, eg 'Unmarried! I do not deny that is a serious blow'
- Wilde's general use throughout the play of silly and comedic witticisms, epigrams, puns and techniques of using paradox to comically indicate a social problem, eg 'Then a passionate celibacy is all that any of us can look forward to'
- the careful language coding of homosexual content, eg the word earnest meant homosexual
- the device of the revelation of the true heritage of the central male characters at the end of the play which works to end the silliness and unravel the earlier assumptions in the play
- the celebratory language of the characters at the end of the play, when the silliness is over, eg 'On the contrary Aunt Augusta. I've now realised for the first time in my life the importance of being Earnest'
- etc.

Given that this is a **closed book** exam, references to the play may be generalised.

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 terminology
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid discussion of interpretations, any valid discussion of contexts and any relevant integrated comments of dramatic methods that are embedded into the argument.

| 0 | 5 | | *Educating Rita* – **Willy Russell** |

Explore the view that 'in this comedy Rita and Frank learn equally from each other'.

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 ideas 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 must 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 4–8.

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:

- that the dramatic comedy of the play is reliant on Rita and Frank both realising how much they have to learn equally from each other, yet they do this in different ways: Frank teaching Rita about literature, poetry, writing, culture, theatre and academia, but Rita teaching Frank about being working class, female, marriage, family and community
- that there is classic dramatic model at work here which demonstrates comedy when the teacher turns into the pupil, and the pupil turns into the teacher, each learning equally from each other
- that the initial teaching is completed by Frank because he is a University tutor and he has knowledge about writing and literature, and that comedy is derived from him trying to teach Rita about literature's power and merits; at this point Rita is crucially the learner
- that the second phase of teaching comes from Rita – who comically attempts to show Frank the world she is from and teach him about the realities of being a working-class woman in early 1980s' England; Frank then becomes the learner
- that as the play progresses, this process of learning is side-by-side, so that as they spend more time together, their discussions mean that both learn together and equally
- that a critical part of the learning is self-discovery and enlightenment and that, as well as sometimes being comic, learning is also positive
- that the learning from Rita and from Frank offers them both 'growth of the soul'
- that the resultant learning brings about problems, eg Frank's failure to become a poet, his alcoholism; Rita's existential crisis of being unhappily caught between two worlds
- that the learning brings about positive change for both of the central characters: their humorous banter helps to reshape them and make them reconsider their lives
- that teaching, learning and self-discovery have an enduring appeal as threads of comedy
- that the play works because its black comedy relating to learning reinforces the strands of self-discovery through ironic reflection on life
- that the play is a socially realist drama, and therefore is expected to have serious and painful moments through learning and self-discovery, yet these are most often underpinned by comedy
- that part of the appeal of the play, and what makes audiences laugh, is that Rita and Frank's learning from each other is something which all human beings have experienced at some point

- the realisation that the learning process can be painful and challenging, but also humorous and heartening
- etc.

Some students might consider:

- that the two do not learn equally, that Rita gains more learning and knowledge from Frank because Frank is a vestibule of knowledge and information; that Rita does not offer Frank anything he did not know or could not work out; that despite some learning taking place between the two, inevitably Frank represents power and knowledge, and Rita does not – she is pretending at it
- others may see the opposite of this and argue that, in fact, it is Rita who is offering true learning to Frank about life and relationships and that Frank's knowledge is useless, pretentious and distant with no place in the real world; that the learning is remote and theoretical only
- that there is a classic dramatic model at work here which demonstrates comedy when the teacher turns into the pupil, and the pupil turns into the teacher, but that this does not always equate to full success or laugh-out loud comedy: the process can be dislocating
- that the dramatic comedy of the play is not always reliant on Rita and Frank both realising how much they have to learn from each other, but on other factors too, such as class collision, language, Standard and Non-Standard English, alcoholism, escape, migration to a better life, rejection of one's own class, snobbery and inverse snobbery, Rita's growing pretentiousness and Frank's frustration
- that the play is not solely reliant on both Frank's learning from Rita and Rita's learning from Frank, and that comedy can come from the situation they are placed in: that the comedy arises from a power struggle by the individual and by the classes
- that self-discovery and enlightenment would have come anyway to the two characters and that, as well as sometimes being comic, learning is also sometimes negative in that it shifts expectations and alters other relationships
- that a good deal of the comedy in the play is not brought about by the direct learning offered between Rita and Frank, but by other important characters in the background of the play: for example, what Julia has to offer Frank and what a number of working-class characters have to offer Rita, (eg the women in the hairdressers, her husband, her mother)
- that the learning from Rita and from Frank offers them both 'growth of the soul' in some ways, but, in other ways, what is learnt is frustrating and leads to a dead-end street, where Rita will not become an academic like Frank, and Frank, in the end, has to reject academia to migrate to Australia where it seems he will lead a simpler life
- that the teaching and its resultant learning bring about problems, eg Frank's failure to become a poet, his alcoholism; Rita's existential crisis of being unhappily caught between two worlds
- that teaching, learning and self-discovery have an enduring appeal as threads of comedy, though they are sometimes difficult to endure and are sometimes tragi-comic
- that the play is actually a black comedy where neither of the characters or those who surround them are particularly happy; the comedy discussing a darker underbelly to the play and that life is profoundly unequal, especially to women
- that the play is a socially realist drama, and therefore is expected to have serious and painful moments through learning and self-discovery
- that part of the appeal of the play and what makes audiences laugh is that Rita and Frank's learning from each other is something which all human beings have experienced at some point, but which actually has limits that are culturally, socially and gender defined
- the realisation that the learning process can be painful and challenging
- etc.

AO4   Explore connections across literary texts

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

- the comedic aspects of learning and self-discovery in working-class people as shown through Rita's language, subject-matter and progress through the play
- the comedic aspects of learning and self-discovery in academia as shown through Frank's language, subject matter and progress through the play
- the comedic and painful aspects of learning and self-discovery, as seen in Rita and Frank's equal and unequal transition
- the comedic aspects of the power of women 'taking on' men of learning, as seen in Rita's ascendancy over Frank
- the comedic aspects of wit and repartee, as seen in the debates over learning between Frank and Rita
- etc.

AO3   Demonstrate understanding of the significance 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 pain of progression as seen in the equal self-discovery of Rita and Frank, teaching each other
- the social context, including the working-class context and the context of higher education, different but reciprocal in terms of equality
- the difficulties and ironies of being in a learning institution, as seen in Frank as the teacher, and Rita as the pupil, but also the reversal of this
- the cultural context, as shown in the comedic and painful lives of Rita and Frank, in terms of both their social and personal learning
- the gender context, as shown by Rita's discourse about female, working-class learning and self-discovery; that it is easier for men of Frank's background to obtain the position he is in
- the economic context of the painful rise of the 'working classes' in relation to the 'opening of doors' within the play
- the historical context of *Educating Rita* lying in a literary tradition of 'learning narratives' beginning with Ovid (*Metamorphoses*), and including *Pygmalion* and *My Fair Lady*
- etc.

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 structural contrasts and comedic clashes in the learning process throughout the play that prompt difficulties, and both comedy and sadness, eg 'You cannot interpret E. M. Forster from a Marxist perspective.'
- the universal structural technique of the dramatic use of soliloquies to show inner thoughts and sadness at the processes of learning both the content of the subject and the wider emotional and spiritual learning, eg 'Poets can break every rule in the book.'
- the humorous yet difficult dialogue between Rita and Frank in their learning, which is specific to Liverpool in the early 1980s, but which also has a wider and lasting appeal, eg 'What sort of a school *did* you go to?'
- the fact that Russell makes it clear in his language, his use of stichomythia (quick-fire dialogue) and his use of monologues, that there is sometimes equal learning, sometimes there is learning but it is unequal, and sometimes the learning may be unconventional but have benefits
- the use of reported dialogue of Rita's which recounts other conversations with her husband,

colleagues and friends over her learning
- the universal use of intertextuality, and the difficult, ironic and comic references to wider literature; the impact of these references upon her learning and Rita's responses to the texts and how Frank learns an 'honest' appreciation of literature, eg the juxtaposition of literature and Rita's life
- Russell's frequent use of literature to make points about learning and social transition difficulties, eg Rita: 'Y'know Peer Gynt. He was searchin' for the meaning of life, wasn't he?' Frank: 'Put at its briefest, yes.'
- the wide use of different registers as a comedic and non-comedic mechanism to explore the difficulties of wider learning, eg Rita: 'An' what happened?' Frank: 'My loss was literature's great gain'
- the idiosyncrasies of Rita's language at each stage of her learning journey, which themselves have a literary/poetic/philosophical quality to them, eg 'I just ended up with a load of quotes an' empty phrases'
- etc.

Given that this is a **closed book** exam, references to the play may be generalised.

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 terminology
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid discussion of interpretations, any valid discussion of contexts and any relevant integrated comments on dramatic methods that are embedded into the argument.