



AS ENGLISH LITERATURE B 7716/1B

Paper 1B Literary genres: Drama: Aspects of comedy

Mark scheme

June 2025

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.

No student should be disadvantaged on the basis of their gender identity and/or how they refer to the gender identity of others in their exam responses.

A consistent use of 'they/them' as a singular and pronouns beyond 'she/her' or 'he/him' will be credited in exam responses in line with existing mark scheme criteria.

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

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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 pages 9–11. 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		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 SCHEME – AS ENGLISH LITERATURE B – 7716/1B – JUNE 2025

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 presentation of the relationship between Petruchio and Katherina
- the dramatic function of Hortensio
- 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: it begins with another in a sequence of Petruchio's tests of wifely obedience, moves on to the desperate Hortensio begging Katherina to co-operate for everyone's sake, climaxes with Katherina's decision to agree, and concludes with the arrival of Vincentio
- structurally, this scene returns to the main plot, after Bianca and Lucentio arrange to elope, and Vincentio's arrival heralds the resolution of the subplot; also when Katherina 'passes' her first test of wifely obedience here, this scene sets up the competition in the final scene, when Petruchio 'triumphs' over Hortensio and Lucentio
- the relationship of Petruchio and Katherina, which has included physical and verbal abuse, antagonism, fighting, bullying and gaslighting, leads to her apparent submission and a 'truce' here
- the relative balance of power between Petruchio and Katherina; her apparent confusion and subjugation here, set against the fact that since she can choose whether to continue or cease her resistance, she has some agency – as Hortensio comments, 'Say as he says, or we shall never go.'
- Petruchio's success in taming Katherina in reference to the taming school plan (and the play's title); his dominance in controlling the narrative and forcing her to submit in the game of relabelling the sun; her decision to comply, perhaps in order to upstage Petruchio later
- Hortensio's comic function as an eyewitness and observer – he originally suggested marrying Katherina to his old friend Petruchio

- his role as part of the taming process as he urges Katherina to surrender; he wants to rest, but also acts as Petruchio's admirer and supporter
- his addressing the audience for comedic purposes in his aside
- the arrival of Vincentio and his role as the butt of the second 'relabelling' joke; Petruchio's opportunistic retesting of Katherina when Vincentio enters, and her corresponding understanding of the game to be played; her exaggerated description of Vincentio and the comedic mocking of the old man
- the importance of Vincentio's arrival to the resolution of the subplot
- the symbolism of the setting, midway between Petruchio's house and Katherina's family home, at a metaphorical crossroads along their shared journey
- etc.

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts

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

- the comedic aspect of disorder giving way to a re-established sense of order, as seen in the apparent harmony of husband and wife
- the comedic aspect of the dupe or gull, with Vincentio representing the older generation being disrespected by the younger
- the comedic aspect of absurdity, with Katherina's address to Vincentio
- the comedic aspect of cruelty, as shown towards Katherina and Vincentio
- 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 and gender context in relation to the status and roles of husband and wife
- the romantic context of the newlyweds apparently uniting and concluding their lengthy period of conflict
- the linguistic context of naming in the sun/moon debate and the bizarre address to Vincentio
- 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 play's title in relation to what takes place dramatically in the extract
- the structural placing of this scene at the end of Act 4, which has alternated between scenes relating to the main plot and the subplot; the fact that Vincentio's arrival signals the convergence of the two love stories
- the verbal sparring between Petruchio and Katherina which leads to a crisis point, before turning into a demonstration of evenly matched wit and humour, eg the shared line 'I say it is the moon. / I know it is the moon.'
- Hortensio's asides and his function as a comic chorus
- the use of the word 'mad', which occurs frequently throughout the play, to describe first Vincentio and then Katherina here, and also Katherina's use of the word 'mistaking'
- the elevated and elaborate language of courtship being comically subverted when both Petruchio and Katherina address Vincentio: 'Young budding virgin'
- the use of repartee, wit and wordplay in the debate about the sun and the moon
- 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 impact of Sebastian's entrance
- comedic resolution
- 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: it begins with Sebastian's hurried entrance and talk of violence, moves on to the astonished reactions of Antonio, Orsino and Olivia, climaxes with the revelation that both twins survived the shipwreck, and concludes with Sebastian informing Olivia that she is engaged to both of them
- structurally, this scene follows one of comic disorder and mistaken identity in which Sir Andrew and Sir Toby were beaten up by Sebastian; the twins' reunion also resolves the Orsino-Viola-Cesario love triangle and sets up the typical comedic 'happy ending' of a double wedding to restore social order
- that Sebastian's entrance provides a moment of intense wonder, surprise and revelation; up to this point only the audience has known that both twins survived the shipwreck and are now in Illyria
- that Sebastian's entrance causes Orsino, Antonio and Olivia to express shock and amazement at this apparent miracle, before the separated twins recognise each other
- that Sebastian's entrance reveals the truth about Viola's identity, first visually through the reactions of the onlookers, and then through dialogue; he is the first person to address Viola by her true name in the entire play, after which she then repeats her name, thus reclaiming her identity
- that Sebastian's function in the play is secondary and passive when set against that of Viola, the active protagonist, but that his arrival is crucial in ensuring a happy ending by enabling both Orsino and Olivia to marry
- that comedic resolution is seen when Viola explains how she managed her disguise with the help of the Captain

- that comedic resolution is seen as the mood changes to one of joy, delight and happiness at the end of the play
- that comedic resolution is seen when it becomes clear that Sebastian will marry Olivia in place of 'Cesario'
- the knowledge that in the original performance conditions, characters such as Viola would be played by boys, making disguise easier and also more complicated
- etc.

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts

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

- the comedic aspect of disorder and resolution
- the comedic aspect of transformation and restoration
- the comedic aspect of revelation, as disguises are removed
- the comedic aspect of marriages as traditional 'happy endings'
- the tragi-comic aspect, as glimpsed in the loneliness that seems to be the fate of Antonio here (and potentially also Sir Andrew, Feste and Malvolio also)
- 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 romantic context of Olivia and Orsino beginning the play in grief and misery, with the arrival of the twins transforming their lives
- the social and economic context in relation to Orsino and Olivia; the twins' arrival restores harmony by making them happy and thus more able to fulfil their public roles
- the gender context of the difficulties Viola faces in Illyria and the comparatively easy time that Sebastian has
- 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 being set up at the start of the play and the resolution in the extract of the comic confusion this has caused
- the contrast between the muted and melancholy tone at the start of the play (with Orsino depressed and lovesick, and both Olivia and Viola mourning their lost brothers) and this joyful, almost magical, reunion scene
- the question and answer exchange between the twins as they recognise one another; the frequency with which they lovingly use each other's first names
- the relative silence of Orsino, Olivia and Antonio after their initial expressions of shock; the fact that these three are all present on stage, yet remain silent observers of the twins' reunion
- the comic irony in Sebastian's informing Olivia 'You are betrothed both to a maid and a man.'
- the contrast in language from the start of the extract ('racked', 'tortured', 'cleft') to that at the end ('cohere', 'gentle', 'contracted')
- 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
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***She Stoops to Conquer* – Oliver Goldsmith**

Explore the significance of town and country to the comedy of the play.

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, 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 *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 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:

- that humour stems from the town and country locations and the conflicting norms and values of the people who live in each place
- that the comic action takes place in the country, with the town an unseen setting
- that both the main plot and the subplot involve town-dwellers caught up in 'the mistakes of a night' in the country
- that humour stems from Kate Hardcastle being from the country and Marlow being from the town, and that the conflict between the two characters is resolved by country girl Kate humbling city slicker Marlow
- that humour stems from the journeying from town to country of Marlow and Hastings, and the play's action taking place where Tony Lumpkin rules and teaches the 'town' characters a lesson; that country 'bumpkin' Tony's comic deception of the sophisticated London gentlemen happens in the geographical setting where disorder is created for fun
- that the denouement shows the triumph of the country over the town, as Kate 'conquers' Marlow and Tony Lumpkin gets his own way, thus providing comedic resolution
- etc.

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts

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

- the comedic aspect of farce, trickery and manipulation, as seen in the behaviour of both town and country characters
- the comedic aspect of misunderstanding, as seen between the town and country characters

- the comedic aspect of naivety and innocence, as seen in the Hardcastles' acceptance of the gentlemen's condescending arrogance
- the comedic aspect of stereotypes and their subversion, eg the low cunning displayed by 'country bumpkin' Tony
- the comedic aspect of the 'fish out of water' trope, as seen in the misadventures of the London gentlemen in the country
- 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 geographical context of the distance between town and country in the eighteenth century
- the social context in relation to the visitors from town going to a location stereotypically linked with bawdy behaviour, a country inn
- the gender context in relation to the treatment of women from different social classes, eg Kate, Constance, Mrs Hardcastle, Bet Bouncer
- the romantic context, in which various characters are united in spite of (or because of) the 'mistakes of a night'
- 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 geographical setting and location of the play, with the Hardcastles' home standing in for a typical country inn
- the structure, in which a clever country girl first humbles the posh Londoner then marries him, to resolve the town-country division
- that Tony, the 'country bumpkin' or 'fool', tricks the posh London gentlemen
- comic hyperbole and irony, eg in Mrs Hardcastle's deluded fetishising of city life, eg 'There is nothing in the world I love to talk of so much as London, and the fashions, but I was never there myself'
- the opposed speech and dialogue patterns of town and country characters
- the 'laughing comedy' genre, designed to make the audience laugh out loud, as opposed to the more typical eighteenth century 'sentimental' comedy' – and the extent to which Goldsmith is mocking this genre
- 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 too dark to be funny’.

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 dark and serious elements may be seen in the mockery of upper-class snobbery, hypocrisy and double standards with regard to education, religion, the marriage market, foreign countries, social obligations and events, money, land, inheritance, etc
- that the play taps into a range of dark and serious cultural concerns, eg if ‘Bunburying’ is a cypher for a hidden gay life, the threat of social exclusion may be seen as dark
- that the pressure of living with the hypocrisy of posh society is dark because it forces characters to behave dishonestly, eg ‘Bunburying’ or Gwendolen and Cecily using diaries as outlets for their fantasy lives
- that the callous attitude to death of some characters is dark, eg Lady Bracknell’s annoyance at the fictional Bunbury’s inconvenient death ‘putting her table out’ and comment that a new widow looks ‘twenty years younger’ since her husband’s death; Jack’s decision to ‘kill off’ his wicked brother in Paris
- that the idea of a nanny actually losing a baby is dark
- that the mockery of organised religion is dark, as seen in Dr Chasuble’s interchangeable christenings, platitudinous sermons, and passion for Miss Prism
- that the word ‘dark’ may be interpreted in several ways
- etc.

Some students might consider:

- that the play is funny because of the comic exaggeration, linguistic jousting, wit and repartee, etc, despite the dark elements
- that the play is funny because it is a comedy of manners in which human foibles are laughed at
- that the play is funny because we are not meant to see the characters as real, they don’t come to any harm – in fact they all get a ‘happy ending’

- that Wilde's representation of various aspects of Victorian life is funny, as shown through his use of farce, wit and humour – eg the multiple christenings, the tea ceremony, the cucumber sandwiches, etc
- that 'Bunburying' is primarily used to create elements of comic farce such as disguise and confused identities, which are funny
- that the play is darkly edgy and witty – with the two notions not mutually exclusive – and that the comedy is funny because it reveals dark truths about upper class society
- etc.

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts

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

- the comedic aspect of exposing human follies, vices and mistakes
- the comedic aspect of deception, disguise and mistaken identity
- the comedic aspect of excess, as seen in the characters' obsession with food (eg the cucumber sandwiches and the tea ceremony)
- the aspect of comedic resolution, when Jack is reunited with his family and allowed to marry Gwendolen
- 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 moral context of posh society's values, attitudes and ideas
- the romantic context in relation to the play's ending with a triple engagement
- the social context in relation to patriarchal inheritance, legitimacy, property and the marriage market
- 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 use of two similar yet contrasting settings, in town and country houses
- the play's subtitle of 'A Trivial Comedy for Serious People'
- the structural resolution of multiple engagements
- the farcical dramatic climax, in which Jack and Algernon's deceptions are exposed
- the use of 'Bunburying' to symbolise the complex nature of a hidden life, with the potential coded meaning of comments such as 'A man who marries without knowing Bunbury has a very tedious time of it'
- the dialogue, repartee and wit of the play
- the use of satire to poke fun at the characters and their preoccupations
- 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.

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Educating Rita – Willy Russell

Explore the significance of education to the comedy of the play.

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

[25 marks]

Some possible content is given below. It suggests some of the ways the Assessment Objectives might be addressed, 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 *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 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:

- that education is key to the comedy of the play, not only in terms of learning about literature, but also about self-knowledge, self-discovery and self-determination
- the educational character arcs of Frank and Rita: Frank states 'I know absolutely nothing' and Rita feels she is ignorant of literature at the start of the play, but they learn from one another
- that Rita teaches Frank to see the real world beyond his academic 'ivory tower' through her passionate enjoyment of literature, eg when she insists that they attend an amateur theatrical performance
- that Rita's perceptive and witty insights – eg noting that Lady Macbeth was a 'cow' – reinvigorate Frank's enjoyment of literature
- that through education, Rita is empowered to choose her own future
- that what both Frank and Rita teach and learn reveal essential truths about identity, class, sexuality and gender
- that questions about what lessons are taught and learned, and who teaches and learns, are essential to the relationship between Frank and Rita, with their roles as 'teacher' and 'learner' shifting throughout the play
- that education can be painful and challenging, as seen in Rita's gradual alienation from her working-class roots, eg changing her name and separating from Denny
- etc.

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts

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

- the comedic aspect of teaching
- the comedic aspect of learning
- the comedic aspect of self-discovery
- 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 social context, including the working-class context and the context of social progression
- the institutional and educational context of the university
- the gender and cultural context, as shown by Rita's discourse about female, working-class learning and self-discovery and Frank's job as a university lecturer
- the historical and literary context of 'learning narratives', from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* through to *Pygmalion* and *My Fair Lady*
- 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 comedic educational setting of Frank's office at the university
- structural contrasts and comedic clashes, eg flashbacks that show Rita's working-class background
- the two-handed format and elements of black comedy and irony
- the humorous and painful dialogue between Frank and Rita about aspects of education
- the use of intertextuality with regard to the books Rita reads, and the use of intertextual references to make points about education, eg Frank's threat to rename himself 'Mary Shelley' as he feels he has created a monster
- the comedic ending, with Rita's second Peer Gynt essay and her giving Frank a haircut
- the use of different speech styles to create comedy, eg Rita's Liverpudlian dialect set against Frank's academic middle-class register
- 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.