



A-level

ENGLISH LITERATURE B

Paper 1A Literary genres: Aspects of tragedy

Wednesday 14 May 2025 Afternoon Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes

Materials

For this paper you must have:

- an AQA 12-page answer book.

Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The **Paper Reference** is 7717/1A.
- Answer **one** question from Section A, **one** question from Section B and **one** question from Section C.
- You may answer on the same Shakespeare play in Sections A **and** B.
- For Section C, you must write about **one** drama text and **one** further text, **one** of which **must** be written pre-1900.
- Do all rough work in your answer book. Cross through any work you do not want to be marked.

Information

- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 75.
- You will be marked on your ability to:
 - use good English
 - organise information clearly
 - use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.
- In your response you need to:
 - analyse carefully the writers' methods
 - explore the contexts of the texts you are writing about
 - explore connections across the texts you have studied
 - explore different interpretations of your texts.

Section A

Answer **one** question in this section.

Either

0	1
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***Othello* – William Shakespeare**

Read the extract below and then answer the question.

Explore the significance of this extract in relation to the tragedy of the play as a whole.

Remember to include in your answer relevant analysis of Shakespeare's dramatic methods.

[25 marks]

Exeunt Othello, Lodovico, and attendants

EMILIA

How goes it now? He looks gentler than he did.

DESDEMONA

He says he will return incontinent.

He hath commanded me to go to bed,

And bade me to dismiss you.

EMILIA

Dismiss me?

DESDEMONA

It was his bidding: therefore, good Emilia,

Give me my nightly wearing, and adieu.

We must not now displease him.

EMILIA

I would you had never seen him.

DESDEMONA

So would not I: my love doth so approve him

That even his stubbornness, his cheeks, his frowns –

Prithee, unpin me – have grace and favour in them.

EMILIA

I have laid those sheets, you bade me, on the bed.

DESDEMONA

All's one. Good faith, how foolish are our minds!

If I do die before thee, prithee shroud me

In one of those same sheets.

EMILIA

Come, come, you talk.

DESDEMONA

My mother had a maid called Barbary:

She was in love: and he she loved proved mad

And did forsake her. She had a song of willow;

An old thing 'twas; but it expressed her fortune,

And she died singing it. That song tonight

Will not go from my mind: I have much to do

But to go hang my head all at one side,

And sing it like poor Barbary – prithee, dispatch.

EMILIA

Shall I go fetch your night-gown?

DESDEMONA

No, unpin me here.

This Lodovico is a proper man.

EMILIA

A very handsome man.

DESDEMONA

He speaks well.

EMILIA I know a lady in Venice would have walked bare-foot to Palestine for a touch of his nether lip.

DESDEMONA (*sings*)

The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,

Sing all a green willow;

Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,

Sing willow, willow, willow;

The fresh streams ran by her and murmured her moans;

Sing willow, willow, willow;

Her salt tears fell from her and softened the stones –

(*She speaks*)

Lay by these.

(*She sings*)

Sing willow, willow, willow –

(*She speaks*)

Prithee hie thee; he'll come anon.

(*She sings*)

Sing all a green willow must be my garland.

Let nobody blame him; his scorn I approve –

(*She speaks*)

Nay, that's not next. Hark, who is't that knocks?

EMILIA It's the wind.

DESDEMONA (*sings*)

I called my love false love, but what said he then?

Sing willow, willow, willow:

If I court moe women, you'll couch with moe men.

(*She speaks*)

So get thee gone; good night. Mine eyes do itch:

Does that bode weeping?

EMILIA

'Tis neither here nor there.

(Act 4, Scene 3)

Turn over for the next question

Turn over ►

0	2
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Read the extract below and then answer the question.

Explore the significance of this extract in relation to the tragedy of the play as a whole.

Remember to include in your answer relevant analysis of Shakespeare's dramatic methods.

[25 marks]

Detested kite, thou liest!
My train are men of choice and rarest parts,
That all particulars of duty know
And in the most exact regard support
The worships of their name. O most small fault,
How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show!
Which, like an engine, wrenched my frame of nature
From the fixed place, drew from my heart all love,
And added to the gall. O Lear, Lear, Lear!
Beat at this gate that let thy folly in
(he strikes his head)
And thy dear judgement out! Go, go, my people.
Exeunt Kent and Knights

Exeunt Kent and Knights

My lord, I am guiltless as I am ignorant
Of what hath moved you.

LEAR It may be so, my lord.

He kneels

Hear, Nature, hear! Dear goddess, hear!
Suspend thy purpose if thou didst intend
To make this creature fruitful.
Into her womb convey sterility,
Dry up in her the organs of increase,
And from her derogate body never spring
A babe to honour her. If she must teem,
Create her child of spleen, that it may live
And be a thwart disnatured torment to her.
Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth,
With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks,
Turn all her mother's pains and benefits
To laughter and contempt, that she may feel
How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child! Away, away!

Exit

Now gods that we adore, whereof comes this?

GONERILL

Never afflict yourself to know more of it;
But let his disposition have that scope
As dotage gives it.

Enter Lear

LEAR

What, fifty of my followers at a clap?
Within a fortnight?

ALBANY What's the matter, sir?

LEAR

I'll tell thee – (*to Gonerill*) life and death! I am
ashamed

That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus,
That these hot tears which break from me perforce
Should make thee worth them. Blasts and fogs upon thee!

(Act 1, Scene 4)

Turn over for Section B

Turn over ►

Section B

Answer **one** question in this section.

Either

0	3
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***Othello* – William Shakespeare**

‘Othello is presented as having no moderation: he loves and hates with the full force of his emotions.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant comment on Shakespeare’s dramatic methods.

[25 marks]

or

0	4
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***Othello* – William Shakespeare**

Explore the significance of murder and killing to the tragedy of the play.

Remember to include in your answer relevant comment on Shakespeare’s dramatic methods.

[25 marks]

or

0	5
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***King Lear* – William Shakespeare**

‘In *King Lear*, those who confront the powerful with the truth have to be admired.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant comment on Shakespeare’s dramatic methods.

[25 marks]

or

0	6
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***King Lear* – William Shakespeare**

Explore the significance of murder and killing to the tragedy of the play.

Remember to include in your answer relevant comment on Shakespeare’s dramatic methods.

[25 marks]

Section C

Answer **one** question in this section.

In this section you must write about **two** texts. **One** text must be a drama text.

One text must be written pre-1900.

You can write about the following texts:

Richard II (pre-1900 drama)
Death of a Salesman (drama)
Tess of the D'Urbervilles (pre-1900)
The Great Gatsby
Keats Poetry Selection (pre-1900)
Poetry Anthology: Tragedy

Either

0	7
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'In tragic texts, families and family life are torn apart.'

To what extent do you agree with this view in relation to **two** texts you have studied?

Remember to include in your answer relevant comment on the ways the writers have shaped meanings.

[25 marks]

or

0	8
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Explore the significance of errors of judgement to the tragedies of **two** texts you have studied.

Remember to include in your answer relevant comment on the ways the writers have shaped meanings.

[25 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS

There are no questions printed on this page

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