



A-level

ENGLISH LITERATURE B

Paper 2B Texts and genres: Elements of political and social protest writing

Thursday 22 May 2025

Morning

Time allowed: 3 hours

Materials

For this paper you must have:

- an AQA 12-page answer book
- a copy of the set text(s) you have studied for Section B and Section C. These texts must **not** be annotated and must **not** contain additional notes or materials.

Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The **Paper Reference** is 7717/2B.
- You must answer the question in Section A, **one** question from Section B and **one** question from Section C. Over Section B and Section C you must write about **three** texts: **one** poetry text, **one** post-2000 prose text and **one** further text. At least **one** of your texts must be written pre-1900.
- Do all rough work in the 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 the question in this section.

0

1

Explore the significance of the elements of political and social protest writing in this extract.

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed analysis of the ways the author has shaped meanings.

[25 marks]

This extract is taken from *Racing Demon* written by David Hare and first performed in 1990. Harry is a gay reverend in the Church of England at a time when gay relationships had been legal for some time but attitudes were still divided. Harry has kept his sexuality a secret and fears that, if it is exposed, those who attend his church and the wider public will turn against him. In this scene, he is confronted by a journalist, Tommy, who is threatening to expose him in the tabloid press.

SCENE FOUR

A darkened street. HARRY going home, in an overcoat, his keys already in his hand as he approaches the front door of a small terraced house. TOMMY ADAIR steps out of the shadows, smoking a cigarette.

HARRY: Hello.

TOMMY: I needed a vicar. I needed someone to talk about sin. So I thought I'd come to an expert.

HARRY: Are you in trouble? Do you mean now? *(Frowns.)* If it's not urgent we can make an appointment.

TOMMY: That'll be too late. I need to be sorted out by Sunday.

HARRY: Sunday? *(Looks closely at TOMMY.)* Do you mean before church? *(Starts to move away, suspicious.)* Why don't you ring in the morning? My number's in the book.

TOMMY: Don't fancy me, eh?

(HARRY gets it.)

HARRY: Not in the slightest. Good night.

(But TOMMY at once goes on to the attack, raising his voice for the first time.)

TOMMY: I'm from a well-known national newspaper. I talked with a great friend of yours. He's rather a sweet and passive boy.

(HARRY just looks, not answering.)

I'm doing an investigative piece. It'll appear next Sunday. If we talked you could give me a number of other names. And that way your own name might not appear. *(There is a pause. Then HARRY moves towards him, casual, not frightened, taking him on.)*

HARRY: I'll send you the synodical¹ paper on exactly the subject you're interested in. Yes. The church set up a committee some years ago. A report was commissioned. I can let you have a copy if you like. If you have space you can print it in full. Did you know we had a synodical debate? Are you a theological correspondent? *(HARRY moves closer to him.)*

The report asserts that genital acts between men are not necessarily wrong. Do you know those words? 'Necessarily'? 'Genital'?

(TOMMY is unamused.)

TOMMY: I wouldn't advise you to be aggressive. You're not in a strong position.

HARRY: In fact I am. (*Smiles, confident.*) You see my big strength is, I don't believe you. No friend of mine would have spoken to you. And anyway, my life is between me and God. And God, as I may best comprehend him, does not work through the Sunday papers. (*Smiles.*) Not at least if He's who I think He is. (*Makes to go.*)

TOMMY: You're digging your own grave.

HARRY: I'll risk that.

TOMMY: (*Shrugs*) It makes no difference.

HARRY: Then go ahead. Good luck. (*Turns and reaches the steps of his house.*)

TOMMY: Shall I give your love to Ewan?

(*For the first time HARRY stops, his back to us. There is just a moment's pause in his step. Then he carries on into the house.*)

HARRY: By all means. Do what you like.

SCENE FIVE

The church. HARRY comes in, in his overcoat. He stands a moment, alone in the dark.

HARRY: Lord, I don't know. Of course I'm frightened. What would you expect? But I won't sink to their level.

I won't speak to Ewan. I trust him. Everything's fine.

I've always been proud that I have no illusions. In the three years I was at Cambridge I only kissed a man once. By the river actually. In the darkness. I couldn't see his face. It still dazzles me, the memory. The three years weren't wasted because . . . there was this single moment of unbelievable happiness. Lord, you know I don't expect more.

We get by on so little. We all wore flannels². And herringbone jackets. The joke is, I still do. We smoked pipes. Long evenings spent discussing Teilhard de Chardin³, and thinking what's his body like under the tweed?

I'm clear-eyed. I think I am. There is people as they are. And there is people as they could be. The priest's job is to try and yank the two a little bit closer. It takes a good deal of time.

People have souls. That man from the newspaper, even. I have to remember. It's my duty. But I also have a duty to fight.

Oh God, please help me. I don't understand. Teach me. How do you fight without hate?

Glossary

¹ synodical – related to the church.

² flannels – trousers.

³ Teilhard de Chardin – a priest who wrote about religion and philosophy.

Turn over for Section B

Turn over ►

Over **Section B** and **Section C**, you must write about **three** texts from the following list:

Songs of Innocence and of Experience (pre-1900)

Tony Harrison: *Selected Poems*

The Kite Runner (post-2000 prose)

Harvest (post-2000 prose)

Hard Times (pre-1900)

Henry IV Part I (pre-1900)

A Doll's House (pre-1900)

The Handmaid's Tale

Section B

Answer **one** question in this section.

Either

0	2
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***Songs of Innocence and of Experience* – William Blake**

‘Rebellious voices in Blake’s poetry are always silenced or ignored.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Blake’s authorial methods.

[25 marks]

or

0	3
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***Selected Poems* – Tony Harrison**

‘In Harrison’s poetry, highly educated individuals and those with authority always look down on the working class.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Harrison’s authorial methods.

[25 marks]

or

0	4
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***The Kite Runner* – Khaled Hosseini**

‘In *The Kite Runner*, those who use power to oppress others do not ultimately succeed.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Hosseini’s authorial methods.

[25 marks]

or

0	5
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***Harvest* – Jim Crace**

‘Mistress Beldam’s rebelliousness and resilience make her an entirely admirable figure.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Crace’s authorial methods.

[25 marks]

or

0	6
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***Hard Times* – Charles Dickens**

‘Ultimately, in *Hard Times* there is no sense of justice.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Dickens’ authorial methods.

[25 marks]

or

0	7
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***Henry IV Part I* – William Shakespeare**

Explore the significance of Falstaff to elements of political and social protest writing in *Henry IV Part I*.

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Shakespeare’s dramatic methods.

[25 marks]

Turn over ►

or

0	8
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***A Doll's House* – Henrik Ibsen (translated by Michael Meyer)**

'It is impossible to sympathise with Torvald given his repressive treatment of Nora.'

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Ibsen's dramatic methods.

[25 marks]

or

0	9
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***The Handmaid's Tale* – Margaret Atwood**

'Gilead is presented as a regime which entirely silences women.'

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Atwood's authorial methods.

[25 marks]

Section C

Answer **one** question in this section.

In your answer you must write about **two** texts that you have **not** used in **Section B**.

Either

1	0
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Explore the significance of differences in social status as presented in **two** political and social protest texts you have studied.

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of authorial methods.

[25 marks]

or

1	1
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Explore the significance of prejudice in **two** political and social protest texts you have studied.

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of authorial methods.

[25 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS

There are no questions printed on this page

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