GCE A LEVEL

A720U30-1

S24-A720U30-1

FRIDAY, 14 JUNE 2024 – AFTERNOON

ENGLISH LITERATURE – A level component 3

Unseen Texts

2 hours

A720U301
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ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

A WJEC pink 16-page answer booklet.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Use black ink or black ball-point pen. Do not use gel pen or correction fluid.

Answer **one** question in Section A and **one** question in Section B.

Write your answers in the separate answer booklet provided, following the instructions on the front of the answer booklet.

Use both sides of the paper. Write only within the white areas of the booklet.

Write the question number in the two boxes in the left-hand margin at the start of each answer, for example **0 1** .

Leave at least two line spaces between each answer.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

Section A carries 50 marks and Section B carries 30 marks.

The number of marks is given in brackets at the end of each question or part-question.

You are advised to spend one hour and 15 minutes on Section A and 45 minutes on Section B.

You are reminded that assessment will take into account the quality of written communication used in your answers.

Section A: Unseen Prose

Answer **one** question in this section.

Each question consists of an unseen prose passage and supporting extracts. You must use the supporting extracts to answer the question.

In your response, you are required to:

- analyse how meanings are shaped
- demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received
- show how different interpretations have informed your reading of the unseen passage.

Either,

Period 1880–1910

0 1 Analyse the following extract taken from George Gissing's novel *The Nether World*, published in 1889.

You must use the supporting extracts which follow the passage to help you consider contexts and different interpretations. [50]

It was the hour of the unyoking of men. In the highways and byways of Clerkenwell there was a thronging of released toilers, of young and old, of male and female. Forth they streamed from factories and workrooms, anxious to make the most of the few hours during which they might live for themselves. Great numbers were still bent over their labour, and would be for hours to come, but the majority had leave to wend stable-wards. Along the main thoroughfares the wheel-track was clangorous; every omnibus that clattered by was heavily laden with passengers; tarpaulins gleamed over the knees of those who sat outside. This way and that the lights were blurred into a misty radiance; overhead was mere blackness, whence descended the lashing rain. There was a ceaseless scattering of mud; there were blocks in the traffic, attended with rough jest or angry curse; there was jostling on the crowded pavement. Public-houses began to brighten up, to bestir themselves for the evening's business. Streets that had been hives of activity since early morning were being abandoned to silence and darkness and the sweeping wind.

At noon to-day there was sunlight on the Surrey hills; the fields and lanes were fragrant with the first breath of spring, and from the shelter of budding copses many a primrose looked tremblingly up to the vision of blue sky. But of these things Clerkenwell takes no count; here it had been a day like any other, consisting of so many hours, each representing a fraction of the weekly wage. Go where you may in Clerkenwell, on every hand are multiform evidences of toil, intolerable as a nightmare. It is not as in those parts of London where the main thoroughfares consist of shops and warehouses and workrooms, whilst the streets that are hidden away on either hand are devoted in the main to dwellings. Here every alley is thronged with small industries; all but every door and window exhibits the advertisement of a craft that is carried on within. Here you may see how men have multiplied toil for toil's sake, have wrought to devise work superfluous, have worn their lives away in imagining new forms of weariness. The energy, the ingenuity daily put forth in these grimy burrows task the brain's power of wondering. But that those who sit here through the livelong day, through every season, through all the years of the life that is granted them, who strain their eyesight, who overtax their muscles, who nurse disease in their frames, who put resolutely from them the thought of what existence *might* be—that these do it all without prospect or hope of reward save the permission to eat and sleep and bring into the world other creatures to strive with them for bread, surely that thought is yet more marvellous.

Workers in metal, workers in glass and in enamel, workers in weed, workers in every substance on earth, or from the waters under the earth, that can be made commercially valuable. In Clerkenwell the demand is not so much for rude strength as for the cunning fingers and the

contriving brain. The inscriptions on the house-fronts would make you believe that you were in a region of gold and silver and precious stones. In the recesses of dim byways, where sunshine and free air are forgotten things, where families herd together in dear-rented garrets and cellars, craftsmen are for ever handling jewellery, shaping bright ornaments for the necks and arms of such as are born to the joy of life. Wealth inestimable is ever flowing through these workshops, and the hands that have been stained with gold-dust may, as likely as not, some day extend themselves in petition for a crust. In this house, as the announcement tells you, business is carried on by a trader in diamonds, and next door is a den full of children who wait for their day's one meal until their mother has come home with her chance earnings. A strange enough region wherein to wander and muse. Inextinguishable laughter were perchance the fittest result of such musing; yet somehow the heart grows heavy, somehow the blood is troubled in its course, and the pulses begin to throb hotly.

Amid the crowds of workpeople, Jane Snowdon made what speed she might. It was her custom, whenever dispatched on an errand, to run till she could run no longer, then to hasten along panting until breath and strength were recovered. When it was either of the Peckovers who sent her, she knew that reprimand was inevitable on her return, be she ever so speedy; but her nature was incapable alike of rebellion and of that sullen callousness which would have come to the aid of most girls in her position. She did not serve her tyrants with willingness, for their brutality filled her with a sense of injustice; yet the fact that she was utterly dependent upon them for her livelihood, that but for their grace – as they were perpetually reminding her – she would have been a workhouse child, had a mitigating effect upon the bitterness she could not wholly subdue.

There was, however, another reason why she sped eagerly on her present mission. The man to whom she was conveying Mrs. Hewett's message was one of the very few persons who had ever treated her with human kindness. She had known him by name and by sight for some years, and since her mother's death (she was eleven when that happened) he had by degrees grown to represent all that she understood by the word 'friend.' It was seldom that words were exchanged between them; the opportunity came scarcely oftener than once a month; but whenever it did come, it made a bright moment in her existence. Once before she had fetched him of an evening to see Mrs. Hewett, and as they walked together he had spoken with what seemed to her wonderful gentleness, with consideration inconceivable from a tall, bearded man, well-dressed, and well to do in the world.

Supporting Extracts:

"If Clerkenwell's name was known in late nineteenth-century London, it was as a hotbed of working-class radicalism. The district's craftsmen had fostered a culture of artisan radicalism which still found powerful expression in the 1880s. The Patriotic Club on Clerkenwell Green (the eighteenth-century building is now, appropriately, the Marx Memorial Library) was one of the most active and advanced of London's many working-class radical clubs. As the decade progressed the most energetic of the new socialist groups, the Social Democratic Federation, found an audience among less skilled Clerkenwellians for its campaigns on unemployment, housing and trade unions for the unorganised."

Whitehead, A. (2018) *George Gissing: The Nether World,* London Fictions.
Available at: https://www.londonfictions.com/george-gissing-the-nether-world.html

The Realistic Novel and its Formation

"The realistic novel was quite different from what has been seen with earlier literature. The most popular form of literature had always been poetry. The realistic novel changed that. This form of literature used journalistic techniques in order to make the literature something closer to real life with facts and general stereotypes of human nature. The attention to detail was made to just report the facts, not commenting or judging on the scene or character."

The Realistic Novel in the Victorian Era (2018) British Literature Wiki. University of Delaware.
Available at: https://sites.udel.edu/britlitwiki/the-realistic-novel-in-the-victorian-era/

Period 1919–1939

Or,

0 2 Analyse the following extract taken from the opening to the novel *The Enchanted April* by Elizabeth Von Arnim, published in 1922.

You must use the supporting extracts which follow the passage to help you consider contexts and different interpretations. [50]

It began in a Woman's Club in London on a February afternoon—an uncomfortable club, and a miserable afternoon—when Mrs. Wilkins, who had come down from Hampstead to shop and had lunched at her club, took up The Times from the table in the smoking-room, and running her listless eye down the Agony Column saw this:

To Those Who Appreciate Wisteria and Sunshine. Small mediaeval Italian Castle on the shores of the Mediterranean to be Let furnished for the month of April. Necessary servants remain. Z, Box 1000, The Times.

That was its conception; yet, as in the case of many another, the conceiver was unaware of it at the moment.

So entirely unaware was Mrs. Wilkins that her April for that year had then and there been settled for her that she dropped the newspaper with a gesture that was both irritated and resigned and went over to the window and stared drearily out at the dripping street.

Not for her were mediaeval castles, even those that are specially described as small. Not for her the shores in April of the Mediterranean, and the wisteria and sunshine. Such delights were only for the rich. Yet the advertisement had been addressed to persons who appreciate these things, so that it had been, anyhow addressed too to her, for she certainly appreciated them; more than anybody knew; more than she had ever told. But she was poor. In the whole world she possessed of her very own only ninety pounds, saved from year to year, put by carefully pound by pound, out of her dress allowance. She had scraped this sum together at the suggestion of her husband as a shield and refuge against a rainy day. Her dress allowance, given her by her father, was £100 a year, so that Mrs. Wilkins's clothes were what her husband, urging her to save, called modest and becoming, and her acquaintance to each other, when they spoke of her at all, which was seldom for she was very negligible, called a perfect sight.

Mr. Wilkins, a solicitor, encouraged thrift, except that branch of it which got into his food. He did not call that thrift, he called it bad housekeeping. But for the thrift which, like moth, penetrated into Mrs. Wilkins's clothes and spoilt them, he had much praise. "You never know," he said, "when there will be a rainy day, and you may be very glad to find you have a nest-egg. Indeed we both may."

Looking out of the club window into Shaftesbury Avenue—hers was an economical club, but convenient for Hampstead, where she lived, and for Shoolbred's, where she shopped—Mrs. Wilkins, having stood there some time very drearily, her mind's eye on the Mediterranean in April, and the wisteria, and the enviable opportunities of the rich, while her bodily eye watched the really extremely horrible sooty rain falling steadily on the hurrying umbrellas and splashing omnibuses, suddenly wondered whether perhaps this was not the rainy day Mellersh—Mellersh was Mr. Wilkins—had so often encouraged her to prepare for, and whether to get out of such a climate and into the small mediaeval castle wasn't perhaps what Providence had all along intended her to do with her savings. Part of her savings, of course; perhaps quite a small part. The castle, being mediaeval, might also be dilapidated, and dilapidations were surely cheap. She wouldn't in the least mind a few of them, because you didn't pay for dilapidations which were already there, on the contrary—by reducing the price you had to pay they really paid you. But what nonsense to think of it…

She turned away from the window with the same gesture of mingled irritation and resignation with which she had laid down The Times, and crossed the room towards the door with the intention of getting her mackintosh and umbrella and fighting her way into one of the

overcrowded omnibuses and going to Shoolbred's on her way home and buying some soles for Mellersh's dinner—Mellersh was difficult with fish and liked only soles, except salmon—when she beheld Mrs. Arbuthnot, a woman she knew by sight as also living in Hampstead and belonging to the club, sitting at the table in the middle of the room on which the newspapers and magazines were kept, absorbed, in her turn, in the first page of The Times.

Mrs. Wilkins had never yet spoken to Mrs. Arbuthnot, who belonged to one of the various church sets, and who analysed, classified, divided and registered the poor; whereas she and Mellersh, when they did go out, went to the parties of impressionist painters, of whom in Hampstead there were many. Mellersh had a sister who had married one of them and lived up on the Heath, and because of this alliance Mrs. Wilkins was drawn into a circle which was highly unnatural to her, and she had learned to dread pictures. She had to say things about them, and she didn't know what to say. She used to murmur, "marvelous," and feel that it was not enough. But nobody minded. Nobody listened. Nobody took any notice of Mrs. Wilkins. She was the kind of person who is not noticed at parties. Her clothes, infested by thrift, made her practically invisible; her face was non-arresting; her conversation was reluctant; she was shy. And if one's clothes and face and conversation are all negligible, thought Mrs. Wilkins, who recognized her disabilities, what, at parties, is there left of one?

Also she was always with Wilkins, that clean-shaven, fine-looking man, who gave a party, merely by coming to it, a great air. Wilkins was very respectable. He was known to be highly thought of by his senior partners. His sister's circle admired him. He pronounced adequately intelligent judgments on art and artists. He was pithy; he was prudent; he never said a word too much, nor, on the other hand, did he ever say a word too little. He produced the impression of keeping copies of everything he said; and he was so obviously reliable that it often happened that people who met him at these parties became discontented with their own solicitors, and after a period of restlessness extricated themselves and went to Wilkins.

Supporting Extracts:

"Von Arnim has an eye for small human failings, the little acts of pettiness and selfishness in which most people indulge. She is perceptive about the way people misread one another's good (and not so good) intentions..."

Tripney, N. (2012) *The Enchanted April* by Elizabeth von Arnim – review, The Guardian. Guardian News and Media. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/jul/22/enchanted-april-von-arnim-review

"*The Enchanted April* sounds as if it would be an appallingly cloying cream puff of a fairy tale, but that would be to ignore that the author habitually kept a pot of lemon juice mixed with vinegar beside her ink-pot."

The Enchanted April (2007) New York Review of Books. (quoting Times Literary Supplement). Available at: https://www.nyrb.com/products/the-enchanted-april?variant=1094931873

"…young women were taking the struggle for freedom into their personal lives. Ideas of duty, sacrifice and the greater good had been debunked by the recent war; for this generation, morality resided in being true to one's self, not to a cause. Towards the end of the decade, some feminists would argue that women's great achievement in the 20s was learning to value their individuality."

Mackrell, J. (2018) The 1920s: 'Young women took the struggle for freedom into their personal lives', The Guardian. Guardian News and Media. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2018/feb/05/the-1920s-young-women-took-the-struggle-for-freedom-into-their-personal-lives

Turn over.

Section B: Unseen Poetry

Answer **one** question in this section.

In your response you are required to analyse how meanings are shaped.

Either,

0 3 Analyse in detail the following poem. [30]

Friendship after Love

After the fierce midsummer all ablaze
Has burned itself to ashes, and expires
In the intensity of its own fires,
There come the mellow, mild, St. Martin days[1]
Crowned with the calm of peace, but sad with haze.
So after Love has led us, till he tires
Of his own throes, and torments, and desires,
Comes large-eyed friendship: with a restful gaze,
He beckons us to follow, and across
Cool verdant vales we wander free from care.
Is it a touch of frost lies in the air?
Why are we haunted with a sense of loss?
We do not wish the pain back, or the heat;
And yet, and yet, these days are incomplete.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

[1] St Martin days: cooler days of Autumn

Or,

0 4 Analyse in detail the following poem. [30]

A City Remembered

Unlovely city, to which few tourists come
With squinting cameras and alien hats;
Left under a cloud by those who love the sun
And can afford to marry – a cloud of bits
Of soot more myriad than gnats, a cloud
Of smoke and rain, an insubstantial threat
Whose colour is the pigment of long wrath,
I think of you, surprised to find my blood
Warmed by a wry desire, a kind of love.
I see the trams, like galleons at night,
Go rocking with their golden cargo down
The iron hills; then hearing that bold din
My other senses frolic at a fête
Of phantom guests – the smells of fish and chips,
Laborious smoke, stale beer and autumn gusts,
The whispering shadows and the winking hips,
The crack of frosty whips, brief summer's dust.
And in that city through a forked November
Love, like a Catherine-wheel, delighted me
And when it sputtered out, hung charred and sombre,
The city flavoured my delicious misery.
And so I guess that any landscape's beauty
Is fathered by associative joys
Held in a shared, historic memory,
For beauty is the shape of our desires.
My northern city, then, by many called
Ugly or worse, much like an aged nurse
Tender yet stern who taught one how to walk,
Is dear to me, and it will always have
A desolate enchantment that I'll love.

Vernon Scannell

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