

OXFORD

INTERNATIONAL
AQA EXAMINATIONS

INTERNATIONAL A-LEVEL ENGLISH LITERATURE

Mark scheme

LT03

Unit 3 Elements in crime and mystery

Version 1.0 Specimen

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 Assessment Writer.

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.

Information for Examiners

Welcome to this mark scheme which is designed to help you to deliver fair and accurate assessment. Please read carefully all sections and ensure that you follow the requirements that they contain.

Arriving at marks

- 1 All questions are framed to address all the Assessment Objectives (AOs). Answers are marked holistically and when deciding upon a mark in a band, examiners should bear in mind the equal weightings of the assessment objectives. 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 candidates 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 candidates 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 candidates 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 are no right answers. Candidates’ 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 candidate 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 reward only what is there and assess accordingly. Some further credit may 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 6–8. The key words for the bands are important and are printed below.

MARK BAND DESCRIPTORS	
Band 5	perceptive/assured
Band 4	coherent/thorough
Band 3	straightforward/relevant
Band 2	simple/generalised
Band 1	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.

The assessment objectives and their significance

12 All questions are framed to test AOs 1 and 2 so if candidates answer the question, then they will be addressing the AOs. In marking questions, however, examiners must also take account of AO3, which tests more than technical accuracy.

The equally weighted AOs are as follows:

AO1: Demonstrate understanding of the ways in which readers find meanings in texts, showing an understanding of genre, the significance of contexts, and the ways in which different interpretations can be found.

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts with close attention to authorial methods.

AO3: Express informed, personal and argued responses to literary texts, using appropriate concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate writing.

Mark scheme

It is important to remember that these students, in the main, are 18 years old so we are judging their skills at the end of Key Stage 5.

	AO	Typical features	How to arrive at mark
<p>Band 5 Perceptive/Assured 21–25 marks</p> <p>‘Perception’ is demonstrated when students are showing the depth of their understanding and responding sensitively to the texts and task.</p> <p>‘Assuredness’ is shown when students write with confidence and conviction.</p>	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> perceptive, assured and sophisticated argument in relation to the task assured use of literary critical concepts and terminology; mature and impressive expression. 	<p>This band is characterised by perceptive and assured work which shows confidence, sharpness of mind and sophistication in relation to the task.</p> <p>At the top of the band students are consistently assured and will demonstrate sensitivity and perception across all three assessment objectives in the course of their response.</p> <p>At the bottom of the band there will be coherence and accuracy with some perception but with less consistency and evenness.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> perceptive understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task assured engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used. 	
	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> perceptive understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task assuredness in the connection between contexts and genre, leading to perceptive interpretations. 	
<p>Band 4 Coherent/Thorough 16–20 marks</p> <p>‘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.</p> <p>‘Thoroughness’ is shown when students write carefully and precisely with detail.</p>	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>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.</p> <p>At the top of the band students will demonstrate a fully coherent and thorough argument across all three assessment objectives in the course of their response.</p> <p>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.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> thorough understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task thorough engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used. 	
	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> thorough understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task coherence in the connection between contexts and genre, leading to carefully explained interpretations. 	

<p>Band 3 Straightforward/ Relevant 11–15 marks</p> <p>‘Straightforward’ work is shown when students make their ideas in relation to the task clearly known.</p> <p>‘Relevant’ work is shown when students are focused on the task and use detail in an appropriate and supportive way.</p>	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<p>This band is characterised by straightforward and relevant work where the student’s response to the task is clear and intelligible.</p> <p>At the top of the band students will demonstrate consistent straightforward understanding in the course of their argument. Ideas will be developed relevantly.</p> <p>At the bottom of the band there will be flashes of relevant understanding with evidence of straightforward thinking.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • straightforward understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task • relevant engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used. 	
	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • straightforward understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task • relevant in the connection between contexts and genre, leading to straightforward interpretations. 	
<p>Band 2 Simple/Generalised 6–10 marks</p> <p>‘Simple’ work is shown when students write in an unelaborated and basic way in relation to the task.</p> <p>‘Generalised’ work is shown when students write without regard to particular details.</p>	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<p>This band is characterised by simple and generalised work which is mainly linked to the task.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>At the bottom of the band there will be inconsistency, but the beginnings of a simple and generalised understanding.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task • generalised engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used. 	
	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task • generalised in the connections between contexts and genre, leading to simple interpretations. 	

<p>Band 1 Largely irrelevant/largely misunderstood/largely inaccurate 1–5 marks</p> <p>‘Largely irrelevant’ work is shown when students write in an unclear way with only occasional reference to what is required by the question.</p> <p>‘Largely misunderstood’ and ‘largely inaccurate’ work is shown when knowledge of the text is insecure, hazy and often wrong.</p>	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some vague points in relation to the task and some ideas about task and text(s). 	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>At the bottom of the band there will be no connection with the task; the writing will be hard to follow and irrelevant.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the writing is likely to be unclear and incorrect; if it is accurate the content will be irrelevant. 	
	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • little sense of the AOs in relation to the task; little sense of how meanings are shaped; little sense of any relevant contexts, genre or interpretations. 	
0 marks		No marks for response when nothing is written or where response has no connection to the text(s) or task.	

0	1
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William Shakespeare: *Macbeth*

‘In crime writing we are often invited to identify with the villain: in *Macbeth*’s case we can’t.’

Discuss this view.

[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 *Macbeth* through the lens of **crime and mystery**, the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

AO1: Demonstrate understanding of the ways in which readers find meanings in texts, showing an understanding of genre, the significance of contexts, and the ways in which different interpretations can be found.

Focus might be on:

- nature of *Macbeth* as hero and/or villain
- how staging and direction can affect audience view
- the extremity of saying we ‘can’t’ sympathise
- the movement of him and our views through the play
- the early presentation of his heroic qualities
- the wilful destruction of others after his first murder
- his initial roles as husband, soldier, subject
- the nature of ambition
- the sense of his self-knowledge at end of the play.

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts with close attention to authorial methods.

Focus might be on:

- the structure of the play and especially the sequence of events
- the early presentation of *Macbeth*’s sensitivity
- the later presentation of his violence and amorality
- the role of Lady *Macbeth*
- the Porter as keeper of hell-gate
- blood and other imagery of evil
- symbolic possibilities in words and objects.

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

AO3: Express informed, personal and argued responses to literary texts, using appropriate concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate writing.

With respect to skill in writing:

- quality of relevant argument, here related to the subjects of Shakespeare's play.
- organisation of ideas
- use of concepts and terminology appropriate to the question
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid discussion of dramatic method, any valid interpretation and any valid discussion of contexts of production and reception which are grounded in the question and which relate to the play as a whole.

0 2

Samuel Taylor Coleridge: *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

To what extent do you agree with the view that ‘Coleridge maintains throughout the poem that the Mariner deserves his punishment for the crimes he commits?’

[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 Rime of the Ancient Mariner* through the lens of **crime and mystery** the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

AO1: Demonstrate understanding of the ways in which readers find meanings in texts, showing an understanding of genre, the significance of contexts, and the ways in which different interpretations can be found.

Focus might be on:

- the Mariner’s pushing the boundaries of exploration and perhaps playing God
- the way that the albatross could represent Christ/Christianity
- religious belief in the late 18th century, the belief in a moral universe
- the horrible psychological torment that the Mariner endures, etc.
- the possible crime of pushing the boundaries of knowledge
- the crime of breaking up the community spirit
- the crime of taking life – thou shalt not kill.

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts with close attention to authorial methods

Focus might be on:

- the use of settings as backdrops for the Mariner’s crimes and his punishment
- structural issues (organisational decisions, the narrative frame, beginnings and endings, the seven parts to the narrative, uses of climaxes, use of rhyme, rhythm etc, relating to where Coleridge focuses on the Mariner’s punishment and crimes)
- use of voices, the embedded story, the Mariner as teller of his own crime and punishment, language of crime and punishment, linguistic devices, patterning (albatross/cross), religious imagery, etc.
- the extent to which Coleridge as author is different from Mariner as narrator, the complexity of having clear interpretations.

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

AO3: Express informed, personal and argued responses to literary texts, using appropriate concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate writing.

With respect to skill in writing:

- quality of relevant argument, here related to the subjects of Coleridge's poem
- organisation of ideas
- use of concepts and terminology appropriate to the question
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid discussion of prose fiction methods, any valid interpretation and any valid discussion of contexts of production and reception which relate to the text as a whole.

0	3
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Robert Browning: *Selected Poems*

The main focus of interest in Browning's poems is the psychology of the criminal.

To what extent do you agree with this view? Remember to include in your answer relevant exploration of Browning's poetic 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 Browning's *Selected Poems* through the lens of **crime and mystery** the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

AO1: Demonstrate understanding of the ways in which readers find meanings in texts, showing an understanding of genre, the significance of contexts, and the ways in which different interpretations can be found.

Focus might be on:

- the ambiguity of *Count Gismond* in terms of the narrator's innocence
- many examples of eccentric or at times horrifying behaviour
- how *The Confessional* focuses on the pain of an innocent betrayer
- other interests within the poems: the actions of the criminals, love relationships, the experience of victims, etc.
- the tortured complexity of the mind of Prophyria's lover, the Duke etc.
- the significance of the historical settings.

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts with close attention to authorial methods.

Focus might be on:

- the effect of the dramatic monologue form
- the use of settings as backdrops for the crime
- elements of romance within the stories
- examples of colloquial language
- dramatic conflicts within the poems
- religious vocabulary and symbolism.

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

AO3: Express informed, personal and argued responses to literary texts, using appropriate concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate writing.

With respect to skill in writing:

- quality of relevant argument, here related to the subjects of Browning's poems
- organisation of ideas
- use of concepts and terminology appropriate to the question
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid discussion of prose fiction methods, any valid interpretation and any valid discussion of contexts of production and reception which relate to the text as a whole.

0	4
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Charles Dickens: *Oliver Twist*

‘In *Oliver Twist* Dickens presents criminals as products of their society.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

[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 *Oliver Twist* through the lens of **crime and mystery** the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

AO1: Demonstrate understanding of the ways in which readers find meanings in texts, showing an understanding of genre, the significance of contexts, and the ways in which different interpretations can be found.

Focus might be on:

- gothic and melodramatic elements of the novel
- the nature of the London districts that breed characters like Fain, Sikes and the Dodger
- the range of different criminal types represented
- the inadequacy of law-enforcement
- how criminals operate as a grotesque parody of mainstream society - going off to work and returning home with rewards etc
- possible view that the criminals choose their lives, can ultimately decide between performing good and evil actions.

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts with close attention to authorial methods.

Focus might be on:

- the effect of the voices of Mr Brownlow and other members of middle-class society in articulating ideas about criminality
- ways in which the narration directs the reader’s response to character and event
- the narrative use of settings: eg the workhouse and Newgate Prison
- the language of the criminals, thieves’ cant, etc.
- the effects of the picaresque structure of the novel
- the conventional ending.

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

AO3: Express informed, personal and argued responses to literary texts, using appropriate concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate writing.

With respect to skill in writing:

- quality of relevant argument, here related to the subjects of Dickens' novel
- organisation of ideas
- use of concepts and terminology appropriate to the question
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid discussion of prose fiction methods, any valid interpretation and any valid discussion of contexts of production and reception which relate to the text as a whole.

0	5
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Edgar Allan Poe: *Collected stories*

‘The isolation of the criminal is the central focus of Poe’s crime stories’

Discuss this view with reference to at least two stories.

[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 Poe’s *Collected Stories* through the lens of **crime and mystery** the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

AO1: Demonstrate understanding of the ways in which readers find meanings in texts, showing an understanding of genre, the significance of contexts, and the ways in which different interpretations can be found.

Focus might be on:

- the tormented character of Roderick Usher
- the lonely figure of *The Man of the Crowd*
- repeated examples of characters retreating from the world
- Poe’s interest in the methods of the detective Dupin in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, and the wider process whereby mysteries are unravelled
- his complex explorations of human suffering
- the dream-like nature of his settings, themselves a central focus.

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts with close attention to authorial methods.

Focus might be on:

- features of the Gothic genre within the stories
- Poe’s use of symbolism eg enclosed spaces
- his ability to create dramatic situations
- examples of theatrical dialogue and monologues
- the controlled, compact nature of the short story form
- the temporal structures of his stories – the impact of the past.

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

AO3: Express informed, personal and argued responses to literary texts, using appropriate concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate writing.

With respect to skill in writing:

- quality of relevant argument, here related to the subjects of Poe's stories
- organisation of ideas
- use of concepts and terminology appropriate to the question
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid interpretation and any valid discussion of contexts of production and reception which relate to the texts as a whole.

0	6
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Robert Louis Stevenson: *Collected Stories*

‘Stevenson’s crime stories have shock value but nothing beyond that’

Discuss this view with reference to *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and at least one other story.

[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 Stevenson’s *Collected Stories* through the lens of **crime and mystery** the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

AO1: Demonstrate understanding of the ways in which readers find meanings in texts, showing an understanding of genre, the significance of contexts, and the ways in which different interpretations can be found.

Focus might be on:

- the extreme nature of events and behaviour
- suggestions of sadism and perversion in the stories
- the appearance in ‘Markheim’ of a character who may be the devil
- evidence of complex psychological explorations of the human consciousness
- the ways in which the stories are open to varied critical readings
- how the stories ask important questions about the nature of evil.

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts with close attention to authorial methods.

Focus might be on:

- examples of violent, dramatic language: eg ‘horror’, ‘terror’, ‘loathed’
- the narrators’ frequent expressions of shock
- sensational material in *The Body Snatcher* and the build up to the ending
- the complex narrative structures
- the power of the gothic descriptions
- allegorical landscapes; psycho-geography.

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

AO3: Express informed, personal and argued responses to literary texts, using appropriate concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate writing.

With respect to skill in writing:

- quality of relevant argument, here related to the qualities of Stevenson's stories
- organisation of ideas
- use of concepts and terminology appropriate to the question
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid discussion of prose fiction methods, any valid interpretation and any valid discussion of contexts of production and reception which relate to the text as a whole.

07

Agatha Christie: *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*

‘Agatha Christie’s *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* illustrates that those affected by crime are rarely innocent.’

To what extent do you agree with this view? Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Christie’s authorial 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 *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* through the lens of **crime and mystery**, the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

AO1: Demonstrate understanding of the ways in which readers find meanings in texts, showing an understanding of genre, the significance of contexts, and the ways in which different interpretations can be found.

Focus might be on:

- the use of setting (time and place) – the English rural society of the 1920s where Poirot has retired to grow his marrows, the peaceful small town of Kings Abbot which is disrupted by the death of Mrs Ferras and the murder of Ackroyd
- the growing influences of American crime and the drug culture
- middle-class society and its veneer of respectability which masks deeper immoral behaviours (used to shock Christie’s readers who would have expected criminals to come from the lower social orders)
- the social milieu of the middle class novel and its faux respectability
- notions of innocence in other crime reading
- the detective as innocent and preserver of innocence
- the investigation by Poirot, in which all characters have something to hide and none shows real feeling for the murder victim (for example, Elizabeth Russell is hiding an illegitimate son who is a drug user, Flora has stolen forty pounds from Ackroyd’s room, Parker has blackmailed his former employer, etc)
- Dr Sheppard who seems to be a friend of the victim, who takes on the role of Poirot’s side-kick, but is himself the ‘scoundrel who drove’ Mrs Ferras to her death and the villain who betrays and murders the man who places immense trust in him, etc
- Poirot’s insistence that everyone is hiding something, ie not telling the whole truth and therefore not innocent, eg Flora Ackroyd, Ursula Bourne, and of course, Dr Sheppard, who all have a ‘back-story’: ‘All these people tonight are suspects. Amongst them I shall find the person who killed Mr Ackroyd’ (Poirot)
- all characters have withheld part or parts of the truth
- Ackroyd’s own lack of innocence, his part in another crime

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- the way the individuals are more interested in covering their own tracks than feeling any grief for the murder victim
 - the murky middle-class world represented in Christie's novel, etc.

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts with close attention to authorial methods

Focus might be on:

- the use of the set piece of Poirot's theatrical exposure of all the characters' crimes (a mock trial of sorts)
- use of Sheppard as first person (unreliable) narrator whose deceptions include tricking the reader, encouraging us to trust him, only to betray us at the novel's conclusion
- use of voice of Sheppard's sister, Caroline, as channel for village gossip and alternative perspective, voice of Poirot, the rational, dispassionate 'foreigner' who brings together multiple strands
- choice of names, etc.

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

AO3: 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 as students address 'To what extent' they agree with the given view
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and terminology
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid discussion of prose fiction methods, any valid interpretation and any valid discussion of contexts of production and reception which are grounded in the question and which relate to the novel as a whole.

0 8

Qiu Xialong: *Death of a Red Heroine*

‘Yu was just an insignificant cop at the bottom, making the minimum wage, having little to say at the bureau’. Consider the role and significance of Yu to the novel as a whole, in the light of this quotation from the novel.

[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 *Death of a Red Heroine* through the lens of **crime and mystery**, the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

AO1: Demonstrate understanding of the ways in which readers find meanings in texts, showing an understanding of genre, the significance of contexts, and the ways in which different interpretations can be found.

Focus might be on:

- the role of sidekick to the main detective
- the vital work that Yu does in solving the crime
- the plodding nature of his investigation but crucial for all that
- the significance of his early years of ‘re-education’
- while ‘bottom’ in rank he is crucial to the case
- his relationships with Party superiors – hierarchies in a supposedly egalitarian society
- his views of those above him.

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts with close attention to authorial methods.

Focus might be on:

- the structure of the novel and the sequence of events being discovered
- the presentation of Yu in specific chapters with his own point of view
- the presentation of his early years and re-education
- the contrast between the presentations of Yu and Chen
- his straightforward language compared to Chen’s poetics
- the presentation of his wife and child
- the significance of where he lives, where he goes with his family etc.

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

AO3: Express informed, personal and argued responses to literary texts, using appropriate concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate writing.

With respect to skill in writing:

- quality of relevant argument
- organisation of ideas
- use of concepts and terminology appropriate to the question
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid discussion of prose fiction methods, any valid interpretation and any valid discussion of contexts of production and reception which are grounded in the question and which relate to the novel as a whole.

0 9

Kate Atkinson: *When Will There Be Good News?*

In *When Will There Be Good News?* coincidence is more important in the solving of crimes than the detectives.'

To what extent do you agree with this view? Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Atkinson's authorial 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 *When Will There Be Good News?* through the lens of **crime and mystery** writing, the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

AO1: Demonstrate understanding of the ways in which readers find meanings in texts, showing an understanding of genre, the significance of contexts, and the ways in which different interpretations can be found

Focus might be on:

- the use of settings – Edinburgh and Devon for example – as backdrops for the various crimes and for their detection
- the way different members of society – as represented by the characters in the world of the novel – are affected by the crimes committed and some become detectives themselves, for example Reggie
- the way that Brodie is a force of morality in wanting criminals caught
- the uses of the various coincidences which, while perhaps overlapped, demonstrate that in the world of the novel there are metaphysical forces at work which are larger than those resulting from human endeavour
- how Atkinson as a postmodern writer subverts the genre by showing the importance of coincidence rather than the solid, systematic and, perhaps, the stylised police work of earlier literary detectives, etc.
- the creation of Jackson Brodie as a rather unusual detective compared to others with rather unusual methods (who is finally able to provide some good news)
- the work done by DCI Louise Munroe in conjunction with Brodie
- use of humour in the creation of coincidences and as Atkinson enters the consciousnesses of her characters – link with the crime writing genre which incorporates comedy
- how Atkinson as a modern writer further develops the 'detective' story, etc.
- Brodie's boarding the train going in the wrong direction (for him)
- the crash having been caused by Reggie's tutor
- the train crashing near Reggie Chase
- the crash bringing Brodie into the vicinity of his old flame, DCI Louise Monroe, who is currently investigating the disappearance of Reggie's employer, Joanna Hunter, whose story opens the novel, etc.
- the way the detectives are used to show the connections between past and present

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- the methodical approach of the detectives, whose methods are essentially pedestrian police work, rather than Poirot-like ratiocination
 - the way the reader has to wait for the end of the novel for the solution to the crime and, making judgements on coincidence/detection, might be premature, etc
 - some might suggest that police work is used by Atkinson in combination with ‘coincidence’ to create ‘explanations’.

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts with close attention to authorial methods.

Focus might be on:

- structural issues (organisational decisions, beginning and ending, uses of climaxes, relating to where Atkinson focuses on the solving of crimes), inclusion of multiple interconnected stories, which are finally related to one another through the return to the event at the opening of the novel (cyclical structure),
- use of voices – essentially third person but use of many focalisers, use of free indirect speech, language of crime and punishment, use of title,
- use of dialogue, linguistic devices,
- language often colloquial but use is made of literary references and allusions, nursery rhymes
- settings – Edinburgh, open countryside, railways, rooms
- use of humour, both in coincidences and in the novel’s tone, etc.

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

AO3: Express informed, personal and argued responses to literary texts, using appropriate concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate writing.

With respect to competence in writing:

- quality of argument as students address ‘To what extent’ they agree with the given view
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and terminology
- technical accuracy

Accept any valid discussion of prose fiction methods, any valid interpretation and any valid discussion of contexts of production and reception which are grounded in the question and which relate to the novel as a whole.

GET HELP AND SUPPORT

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at oxfordaqaexams.org.uk

You can contact the English subject team directly at:

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