

OXFORD

INTERNATIONAL
AQA EXAMINATIONS

INTERNATIONAL GCSE

ENGLISH LITERATURE

(9275)

Paper 2a poetry and unseen texts

Paper 2b poetry

Exemplar student responses with commentary

For teaching from September 2016 onwards

For International GCSE exams in May/June 2018 onwards

This guide includes some further specimen questions for Paper 2a Poetry and unseen texts (and Paper 2b Poetry) with some exemplar student responses and commentary.

It is intended to provide some examples of the kind of responses that might be submitted with some exemplification of the mark scheme connected to that response. Each series, the intention is to provide further exemplary responses as they become available.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES (AOs)

- AO1:** Understanding of, and engagement with, themes, ideas and contexts (40%).
- AO2:** Analysis of how writers create meanings and effects (40%).
- AO3:** Express informed, personal responses to literary texts, using appropriate terminology, and coherent, accurate writing (20%).

GENERIC MARK SCHEME

Paper 2: Route A Questions 1–4, Route B Questions 1–3, (30 marks – AO1=12, AO2=12, AO3=6)

Mark	AO	Typical features	How to arrive at a mark
Level 6 Convincing, critical analysis and exploration 26–30 marks	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exploration of themes/ideas/perspectives/contextual factors shown by specific, detailed links between context/text/task judicious use of precise references to support interpretation(s). 	<p>At the top of the level, a student’s response is likely to be a critical, exploratory, well-structured argument. It takes a conceptualised approach to the full task supported by a range of judicious references. There will be a fine-grained and insightful analysis of language and form and structure. Convincing exploration of one or more theme/idea/perspective/contextual factor/interpretation.</p> <p>At the bottom of the level, a student will have Level 5 responses and be starting to demonstrate elements of exploratory thought and/or analysis of writer’s methods and /or contexts.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> analysis of writer’s methods exploration of effects of writer’s methods on reader. 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> critical, exploratory, conceptualised response to task and whole text. 	
Level 5 Thoughtful, developed consideration 21–25 marks	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> thoughtful consideration of themes/ideas/perspectives/contextual factors shown by examination of detailed links between context/text/task apt references integrated into interpretation(s). 	<p>At the top of the level, a student’s response is likely to be thoughtful, detailed and developed. It takes a considered approach to the full task with references integrated into interpretation; there will be a detailed examination of the effects of language and/or structure and/or form. Examination of themes/ideas/perspectives/contextual factors, possibly including alternative interpretations/deeper meanings.</p> <p>At the bottom of the level, a student will have Level 4 responses and be starting to demonstrate elements of thoughtful consideration and/or examination of writer’s methods and/or contexts.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> examination of writer’s methods consideration of effects of writer’s methods on reader. 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> thoughtful, developed response to task and whole text. 	

Mark	AO	Typical Features	How to arrive at a mark
Level 4 Clear understanding 16–20 marks	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear understanding of themes/ideas/perspectives/ contextual factors shown by specific links between context/text/task effective use of references to support explanation. 	<p>At the top of the level, a student’s response is likely to be clear, sustained and consistent. It takes a focused response to the full task which demonstrates clear understanding. It uses a range of references effectively to illustrate and justify explanation; there will be clear explanation of the effects of a range of writer’s methods. Clear understanding of themes/ideas/perspectives/contextual factors.</p> <p>At the bottom of the level, a student will have Level 3 responses and be starting to demonstrate elements of understanding and/or explanation of writer’s methods and/or contexts.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear explanation of writer’s methods understanding of effects of writer’s methods on reader. 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear, explained response to task and whole text. 	
Level 3 Explained, structured comments 11–15 marks	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> some understanding of implicit themes/ideas/ perspectives/contextual factors shown by links between context/text/task references used to support a range of relevant comments. 	<p>At the top of the level, a student’s response is likely to be explanatory in parts. It focuses on the full task with a range of points exemplified by relevant references from the text; there will be identification of effects of a range of writer’s methods. Explanation of some relevant ideas/contextual factors.</p> <p>At the bottom of the level, a student will have Level 2 responses and be starting to explain and/or make relevant comments on writer’s methods and/or contexts.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explained/relevant comments on writer’s methods identification of effects of writer’s methods on reader. 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> some explained response to task and whole text. 	

Mark	AO	Typical Features	How to arrive at a mark
Level 2 Supported, relevant comments 6–10 marks	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> some awareness of implicit themes/ideas/contextual factors comments on references. 	<p>At the top of the level, a student’s response is likely to be relevant and supported by some explanation. It will include some focus on the task with relevant comments and some supporting references from the text. There will be identification of effects of deliberate choices made by writer. Awareness of some contextual factors.</p> <p>At the bottom of the level, a student will have Level 1 responses and be starting to focus on the task and/or starting to show awareness of the writer making choices and/or awareness of contexts.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identification of writers’ methods comments on effects of methods on reader. 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> supported response to task and text. 	
Level 1 Simple, explicit comments 1–5 marks	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> simple comment on explicit ideas/contextual factors reference to relevant details. 	<p>At the top of the level, a student’s response is likely to be narrative and/or descriptive in approach. It may include awareness of the task and provide appropriate reference to text; there will be simple identification of method. Simple comments/responses to context, usually explicit.</p> <p>At the bottom of the level, a student’s response will show some familiarity with the text.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> awareness of writer making deliberate choices simple comment on effect. 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> simple comments relevant to task and text. 	
0 marks	nothing worthy of credit/nothing written.		

EXEMPLAR STUDENT RESPONSES WITH EXAMINER COMMENTARY

In Section A students respond to one question from a choice of two on the Oxford AQA Poetry anthology *People and Places*. Below is a further specimen question for Question 2:

Section A: *People and Places*

Answer one question from Section A.

- 0 2** Explore how poets present the effects of nature on people in one or more of the poems from *People and Places*.

[30 marks]

INDICATIVE CONTENT

EXAMINERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO REWARD ANY VALID INTERPRETATIONS. ANSWERS MIGHT, HOWEVER, INCLUDE SOME OF THE FOLLOWING:

AO1

- ideas about nature being dangerous, eg the power of the wind in *Wind*
- ideas about nature rewarding onlookers, eg the climber in *Below the green corrie*
- ideas about nature bringing change, eg the hurricane in *Hurricane hits England*
- ideas about nature reflecting/affecting human beings, eg the couple in *Winter swans*.

AO2

- use of rhyme and verse form, eg in *London*
- use of structure, eg in *Futility*
- use of simile and metaphor to convey the power of nature, eg in *Wind*
- use of nature to reflect human life, eg in *Hurricane hits England* or *The Great Storm*.

AO3

Examiners are looking to award the student's proficiency in:

- presenting an argument
- organising their thoughts
- responding to the task
- communicating their ideas.

STUDENT A

AO1: Comment supported.

In 'Wind' by Ted Hughes there are lots of effects on people. **The wind hurts the eyes of the speaker, 'the brunt wind that dented the balls of my eyes'**. The people in the house sit huddled by the fire, and they can feel the house move and the windows shaking. **Ted Hughes uses a metaphor, 'the roots of the house', to make you feel this.**

AO2: Writer's choice identified, effect identified.

In Storm on the Island by Seamus Heaney nature seems to be battering the people on the island. They are 'bombaraded by the air as they sit in their houses. Heaney uses a simile, 'spits like a tame cat turned savage', which is very effective. The people seem to be afraid, but really there's nothing to be afraid of.

AO1: Some explanation.

Below the Green Corrie by Norman McCaig is more cheerful. The speaker of the poem feels threatened by the mountains, full of threats, full of thunders', but **by the end he thinks they look 'marvellous', and he is 'enriched' by them, which tells you how much he likes them.**

EXAMINER COMMENTARY

This is a Level 2 response. There is some focus on the task, and comments are carefully supported with references from the texts. Writer's choices are identified, though effects are very vague. There is some explanation in the writing about *Below the green corrie*. Awareness of theme/contextual factors is rather thin.

STUDENT B

AO1: Reference supports relevant comment.

In 'Wind' by Ted Hughes nature is presented as a very strong, frightening force for the people in the house. When the man is outside he 'scaled' along the house-side, showing how difficult it was, and when he looks at the hills the metaphor about 'the tent of the hills' shows how strong the wind was. **'The roots of the house move' tells you how strong the wind is too.**

AO1: Some understanding of the effect of nature.

In 'Storm on the island' by Seamus Heaney' the people seem to be prepared for the storm. 'we are prepared', because they have built their houses low to the ground and strong. **But nature is stronger than they think.** The simile of 'spits like a tame cat turned savage' **shows how it can turn against them, so that they are frightened of it in the end.**

AO2: Method/effect identified.

'Below the Green Corrie' is different to 'Storm on the Island', because at first the speaker is frightened by the mountains because they seem to be 'like bandits', but he changes his mind about them. He finds that he is 'enriched' by them and at the end he is in sunshine. The weather has changed and the mountain is lit by 'a bandolier of light'. **The metaphor suggests that nature isn't dangerous after all.**

AO2: Method/effect identified.

EXAMINER COMMENTARY

This is a Level 3 response. Responses to the poems and the task are explained throughout, and supported with relevant references to the text. A range of effects of writer's methods are identified, but never quite explained. Some understanding of the context of nature is shown. All criteria in Level 3 have been achieved.

STUDENT C

In 'Wind' by Ted Hughes and 'Storm on the Island' by Seamus Heaney the poets show nature as a force that seems to attack people, leaving them frightened by its sheer power, but 'Below the Green Corrie' shows nature as a much more benevolent force, which enriches man's life.

AO2: Considers the effects of the metaphor.

'Wind' shows nature as an unrelenting and dangerous force right from the opening line. The metaphor of the house (man's world) being 'far out at sea' suggests how unsettling the force of the wind is, **not only because it has seemed to be out of its element, but perhaps because being 'at sea' suggests being unsure of what is happening.** The speaker 'scaled' along the house-side, suggesting it was as difficult as climbing a mountain, and in 'the tent of the hills drummed and strained its guyrope' the writer suggests cleverly that the effect of the wind on the eyes makes it look as though the hills are flapping like a tent. The wind stops all human activity in the house, which seems as though it might 'shatter', and the people in it seem transfixed by its power. Feeling 'the roots of the house move' suggests that the house is like a tree which might be uprooted by nature's power, the power of the wind.

AO1: Effective use of references.

'Storm on the Island' is similar in the way that it describes the effect of nature. This time it is wind and sea which affect people. At the beginning the people in the poem seem quite relaxed about the possibility of a storm: **they are 'prepared', 'never troubled', 'forgetting' the danger they might be in.** The last 6 lines, though, show how they are threatened by the storm. The simile about the spray being like 'a cat turned savage', shows the change from something apparently 'tame' and safe like a cat to something wild and dangerous: **nature is ready to attack.**

AO1: Understanding of themes/ideas.

'Below the Green Corrie' is the exact opposite of this, because it goes in the opposite direction. At the beginning the mountains seem 'like bandits' and therefore dangerous, and Norman McCaig uses 'dark light', 'threats' and 'thunders' to add to the sense of danger. But whereas the Heaney poem begins happily and ends with fear, this is the other way round. The speaker finds that he has been 'enriched' by the experience. The sun is coming out as he is leaving the mountain, very different to the 'dark light' at the beginning, and although the mountain still looks like a bandit the sunshine is presented as a 'bandolier of light', the metaphor suggesting the sunlight is like a bright sash, creating quite the opposite feeling to the other two poems, which end with fear.

EXAMINER COMMENTARY

This is a sustained and focused response to the task and the poems, with references used effectively throughout, and the effects of a range of writer's methods clearly understood. It fulfils all the criteria for Level 4 and in addition starts to consider the effects of some methods, taking the response into the bottom of Level 5.

In Section B students respond to one compulsory question on an unseen poem.

Section B: Unseen poetry

Answer Question 3.

0 3

Read the poem below and then answer the question that follows.

THE JAGUAR

The apes yawn and adore their fleas in the sun.
The parrots shriek as if they were on fire, or strut
Like cheap tarts to attract the stroller with the nut.
Fatigued with indolence, tiger and lion

Lie still as the sun. The boa-constrictor's coil
Is a fossil. Cage after cage seems empty, or
Stinks of sleepers from the breathing straw.
It might be painted on a nursery wall.

But who runs like the rest past these arrives
At a cage where the crowd stands, stares, mesmerized,
As a child at a dream, at a jaguar hurrying enraged
Through prison darkness after the drills of his eyes

On a short fierce fuse. Not in boredom—
The eye satisfied to be blind in fire,
By the bang of blood in the brain deaf the ear—
He spins from the bars, but there's no cage to him

More than to the visionary his cell:
His stride is wildernesses of freedom:
The world rolls under the long thrust of his heel.
Over the cage floor the horizons come.

Ted Hughes

In *The jaguar* how does the poet present the effects of being caged on the jaguar and the other animals?

[30 marks]

INDICATIVE CONTENT

EXAMINERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO REWARD ANY VALID INTERPRETATIONS. ANSWERS MIGHT, HOWEVER, INCLUDE SOME OF THE FOLLOWING:

AO1

- the static positions of some of the other animals, and their acceptance of being caged
- the excitement created amongst the onlookers by the jaguar's power
- the absence of the cage in the jaguar's mind
- the freedom that the jaguar has despite the cage.

AO2

- use of short sentences in conveying the stillness of the other animals
- use of metaphor and simile to convey the snake's stillness and the parrots' shallow attitudes
- use of single syllable line to convey the speed and eagerness of the crowd
- use of syntax in the final line to convey the action in the jaguar's head.

AO3

Examiners are looking to award the candidate's proficiency in:

- presenting an argument
- organising their thoughts
- responding to the task
- communicating their ideas.

STUDENT A

AO2: Simple identification of method, with a suggestion of effect.

Most of the animals in the zoo are asleep or quiet, but the parrot isn't, and when people look at the jaguar they can see that it's moving around its cage. The poet describes the boa-constrictor as being 'a fossil', which is a **metaphor for it not moving**.

AO1: Reference to detail.

At the beginning of the poem the visitors to the zoo go from cage to cage, but there isn't much happening apart from **the parrots shrieking**, but when they get to the jaguar's cage they see the jaguar moving all the time, and it seems angry by the way it looks and moves.

EXAMINER COMMENTARY

The response is mostly narrative, but there are some simple comments about the animals relevant to task and text, and references to details. The sentence about the boa constrictor clearly indicates an awareness of the writer's choice, with a comment on effect. The response satisfies all the criteria for Level 1, and just gets into Level 2.

STUDENT B

AO2: Clear explanation of effect of writer's method.

AO1: Effective use of references.

AO2: Range of effects of writer's methods explained by now.

AO1: Understanding of ideas in poem.

Until the visitors reach the jaguar's cage, the animals seem used to being caged. The parrots engage with the watching people, strutting 'like cheap tarts', the simile suggesting that they have cheapened themselves in order to get food from the onlookers. The other animals in the first two stanzas are tired as suggested by 'yawn', 'fatigued' and 'sleepers', or 'still'. It's noticeable that dangerous creatures in the wild, such as the tigers and lions, are the opposite here, while the boa-constrictor's coil is a 'fossil', the metaphor suggesting a stillness that will never change.

The poem changes when the crowd is drawn to the jaguar's cage. It suddenly speeds up, because the line beginning 'But' is all short words and vowels and includes 'runs', the first fast action in the poem. Unlike the other creatures, the jaguar is 'hurrying' and 'enraged', and is on a 'short fierce fuse', the words suggesting that the animal will explode with rage. There is a mention of 'prison', but the poet suggests that the jaguar doesn't see or hear what's around him, 'blind' and 'deaf' to his cage, but has a sort of 'freedom' in his head. In the last line, 'Over the cage floor the horizons come', the poet chooses to end the poem with 'come', the action contrasting with 'The apes yawn' at the beginning.

EXAMINER COMMENTARY

This is a sustained response to the question, focusing on methods and showing clear understanding of context and effects. It is a clear, explained response to the task and the whole text, fulfilling all the requirements for a mark at the top of Level 4.

STUDENT C

AO2: Consideration of effects.

AO2: Beginnings of analysis of methods/effects.

AO2: Analysis of language and

AO1: Thoughtful consideration of ideas.

The effect of being caged is very different for the jaguar compared to the other animals. Apart from the gaudy parrots, who are the only ones to interact with the watchers, the rest of the usually dangerous animals mentioned in the first two stanzas are still or sleeping, so that nothing seems to be happening: the last line in this part of the poem, 'It might be painted on a nursery wall', suggests both the lack of movement and the lack of danger. Like the first line, it's end-stopped: nothing much is happening. The boa-constrictor's coil is 'a fossil', suggesting both the curled shape and the stillness, so still it seems carved in stone, and immobile for a long time.

The poem changes sharply at the beginning of the third stanza, marked by the speed of the line, full of short words and vowel sounds, quite unlike the three long vowel sounds in the first line of the poem, by 'runs', literally a fast action, and the enjambment into the next line – in fact there are no full stops in this stanza, for the first time. In contrast to the other animals, the jaguar is characterised by anger and movement. He is 'enraged', 'on a short fierce fuse' with no comma after 'short' to slow the phrase down, and following 'the drills of his eyes', suggesting an unstoppable mechanism. Most strikingly, he doesn't see the cell at all as he moves ceaselessly, 'hurrying' and spinning from the bars, and is compared to a 'visionary'. Whereas the parrots are compared to 'cheap tarts', the jaguar is compared to a higher level of humanity, suggesting the poet's admiration. Unlike the others, the jaguar seems to have 'freedom', and tremendous power, at least in its own head, as the world is rolled by his own actions, and the poem ends stressing this, through the poet's choice of syntax in delivering the action of 'come' as the last word.

EXAMINER COMMENTARY

This is a critical response to the task and text, with comments supported effectively with a range of judicious references. There is insightful analysis of a range of methods within a well-structured response. The whole is clearly a Level 6 response, towards the top.

Only students following Route A and therefore taking Paper 2a Poetry and unseen texts are required to respond to the compulsory question in Section C on an unseen prose text.

Section C: Unseen prose

Answer Question 4.

0 4

Read the opening of *The snow kimono* by Mark Henshaw and then answer the question that follows.

There are times in your life when something happens after which you're never the same. It may be something direct or indirect, or something someone says to you. But whatever it is, there is no going back. And inevitably, when it happens, it happens suddenly, without warning.

*

Paris: July 1989

When Auguste Jovert stepped out of his apartment building on rue St Antoine to get his evening paper, it was dusk. The streetlamps were lit. Rain still fell in a thin mist. The roads shone. To anybody else it would have been obvious – accidents hovering like hawks in the air.

As he made his way along the wet pavement, in his coat, his umbrella unfurled above his head, he was thinking about a letter he had received that day. It was from a young woman, someone he had never met before, who had made an extraordinary claim. She claimed she was his daughter.

He had stood that morning in the cool, empty foyer of his apartment building reading and re-reading the letter. He did not at first see the small photograph caught in the corner of the envelope. When he did, he raised it to his face. One look into the young woman's eyes and he knew that it was true.

How does the writer use this opening to interest the reader, and to create a sense of place and character?

[30 marks]

INDICATIVE CONTENT

EXAMINERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO REWARD ANY VALID INTERPRETATIONS. ANSWERS MIGHT, HOWEVER, INCLUDE SOME OF THE FOLLOWING:

AO1

- the general nature of the opening paragraph
- the details of light and weather in establishing place
- the careful nature of Jovert
- the mystery surrounding Jovert's daughter.

AO2

- use of the direct appeal to the reader in the opening paragraph
- use of short, direct sentences and phrases to establish place
- use of imagery to establish sense of imminent danger
- use of different times to establish effect on Jovert.

AO3

Examiners are looking to award the candidate's proficiency in:

- presenting an argument
- organising their thoughts
- responding to the task.
- communicating their ideas.

STUDENT A

AO1: Simple comment.

The writer gets you interested because you don't know what happened to his daughter. He knows it's true, though, at the end.

AO1: Simple comment.

AO1: Reference to relevant detail.

There might be an accident happening, and the writer describes that 'like hawks'.

AO2: Aware of writer making choice.

EXAMINER COMMENTARY

This is a Level 1 response, with some relevant comments and details and an awareness of the writer making a choice.

STUDENT B

AO1: Explains comment.

The writer gets you interested by having a first paragraph which seems to talk to the reader directly, and it suggests that something might happen after which 'you're never the same', so we know that something is going to happen which will change somebody forever. This might be the letter that Jovert gets from his daughter, but we don't know that yet, and want to find out. The writer leaves the reader with quite a few questions by the end of this extract.

AO2: Comments on effect.

The writer describes the place very quickly. He suggests that there might be accidents about to happen, and describes this with a simile, 'hovering like hawks in the air', so there's a sense of danger in the air, but we don't know what it is yet.

Some time has passed since Jovert received the letter, and we wonder what he has done about his daughter since he received the letter, and especially since he saw the photograph, which must have been a real surprise. He seems very calm considering what's happened, just going out to get a newspaper as though everything is normal.

EXAMINER COMMENTARY

This is a Level 3 response, focusing on the task with relevant comments and some identification of effects of the writer's methods, though none are really explained.

STUDENT C

AO2: Consideration of effects.

The writer makes this opening interesting by beginning with a paragraph, cut off from the opening events by an asterisk in the text, which suggests that something sudden and devastating is going to happen to somebody, and seems to appeal to the readers to think about their own lives, in a way, by being separate from the events that we expect to start to unfold at the beginning of a book. 'Without warning,' the final two words before the characters are introduced, adds to the sense of expectation.

AO2: Analysis of writer's methods and exploration of effects.

Place and atmosphere are established very quickly by the writer, through short, direct statements, featuring 'dusk', 'lit', 'a thin mist', and 'The roads shone'. The sentence 'To anyone else it would have been obvious – accidents hovering like hawks in the air', is particularly effective. Why isn't it obvious to him? Are there going to be accidents, and if so what? They are 'hovering', which suggests something looking down, like fate, perhaps, or something or somebody watching, and 'like hawks' suggests not only strong vision, but a sudden and dangerous quality if the 'hawk' swoops. Creating these questions in the reader's mind makes the opening interesting, and creates a need to know the answers.

AO1: Thoughtful consideration of ideas.

The next two paragraphs may provide some of the answers, if the claim in the letter is the unexpected event foreshadowed in the opening paragraph. Although it is 'extraordinary' it doesn't seem dangerous, and Jovert seems calm. He is 'thinking about' the letter rather than doing anything, apparently, and the writer cleverly shows this by providing a flashback to when he received the letter, and the moment when he 'raised it to his face' and looked into the woman's eyes, which makes the moment really personal.

EXAMINER COMMENTARY

This is a thoughtful, developed response to the task, with a detailed examination of the effects created by the writer. The analysis of the sentence in the second paragraph clearly lifts the response into Level 6.

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