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# AS

# English Literature B

7716/2B Paper 2B Literary Genres: Prose and Poetry: Aspects of Comedy

Mark scheme

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7716

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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.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from [aqa.org.uk](http://aqa.org.uk)

## Level of response marking instructions

Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level. There are marks in each level.

Before you apply the mark scheme to a student's answer read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. You can then apply the mark scheme.

### Step 1 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer. With practice and familiarity you will find that for better answers you will be able to quickly skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme.

When assigning a level you should look at the overall quality of the answer and not look to pick holes in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level, ie if the response is predominantly level 3 with a small amount of level 4 material it would be placed in level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the level 4 content.

### Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help with this. The exemplar materials used during standardisation will help. There will be an answer in the standardising materials which will correspond with each level of the mark scheme. This answer will have been awarded a mark by the Lead Examiner. You can compare the student's answer with the example to determine if it is the same standard, better or worse than the example. You can then use this to allocate a mark for the answer based on the Lead Examiner's mark on the example.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points. Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the Indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

## Information for Examiners marking Aspects of comedy: closed book

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

### The significance of closed book

Examiners must understand that in marking a closed book exam there are examining implications. Students do not have their texts in front of them, so while it is expected that they will use quotations, it is also legitimate to use close textual references. They will have had to memorise quotations so there may be some errors which should not be over penalised. Detailed discussions of particular sections of texts are less likely here than in open book exams. Instead, students may range broadly across their texts as they construct their arguments.

There are specific issues for AO2 – how meanings are shaped in texts. Students will not have the texts in front of them, so although they will sometimes be able to make specific references to structural and organisational issues, at other times they will be more general.

### Arriving at Marks

1. All questions are framed to address all the Assessment Objectives (AOs). Weightings are given above the generic mark scheme. Answers are marked holistically but, when deciding upon a mark in a band, examiners should bear in mind the relative weightings of the assessment objectives (see page 5) and be careful not to over/under credit a particular skill. This will be exemplified and reinforced as part of examiner training and standardisation. 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 students 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 students 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 students 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 is not only one right answer. Students’ 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 student 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 only reward what is there and assess accordingly. Some further credit can 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 page 7. The key words for the bands are important and are printed below.

MARK BAND DESCRIPTORS	
Band 5 (21–25)	perceptive/assured
Band 4 (16–20)	coherent/thorough
Band 3 (11–15)	straightforward/relevant
Band 2 (6–10)	simple/generalised
Band 1 (1–5)	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.

### Advice about marking each section

#### Section A

12. Examiners need to bear in mind the following key points when marking extract based questions:
- does the student have an overview of the extract?
  - has the student written about dramatic method?
  - has the student quoted from the extract to support ideas?
  - the student's AO1 competence.

In the case of a significant omission to an answer the examiner should not give a mark higher than Band 4.

## Section B

13. Examiners need to bear in mind the following key points when marking questions based on single texts:

- has the student engaged in a relevant debate or constructed a relevant argument?
- has the student referred to different parts of the text to support their views?
- has the student referred to the author's dramatic method?
- the student's AO1 competence.

In the case of a significant omission to an answer the examiner should not give a mark higher than Band 4.

## Annotation

14. Examiners should remember that annotation is directed solely to senior examiners.
15. In addition to giving a mark, examiners should write a brief summative comment indicating how the mark has been arrived at. These comments are likely to mirror the appropriate mark band descriptors but comments must not be mechanical. Examiners need to describe student performance.
16. Please remember that scripts can go back to students, so although your audience is a senior examiner, you must express your views temperately.
17. Use the Model Marked Script for guidance.

## The assessment objectives and their significance

18. All questions are framed to test AOs 5, 4, 3 and 2, so if students answer the question, then they will be addressing the AOs. In marking questions, however, examiners must also take account of AO1.

The AOs are as follows:

**AO5** Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations. (12%)

**AO4** Explore connections across literary texts. (12%)

**AO3** Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received. (24%)

**AO2** Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts. (24%)

**AO1** Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression. (28%)

It is important to remember that these students are 16 to 17 years old, so we are judging their skills at a midway point in Key Stage 5.

Weightings for each question are as follows:

AO5: 3 marks AO4: 3 marks AO3: 6 marks AO2: 6 marks AO1: 7 marks

Mark	AO	Typical features	How to arrive at mark
<p>Band 5 <b>Perceptive/Assured</b> <b>21-25 marks</b></p> <p>‘<b>Perception</b>’ is demonstrated when students are showing the depth of their understanding and responding sensitively to the texts and task.</p> <p>‘<b>Assuredness</b>’ is shown when students write with confidence and conviction.</p>	AO5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceptive and confident engagement with the debate set up in the task</li> </ul>	<p>This band is characterised by <b>perceptive</b> and <b>assured</b> 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 <b>assured</b> and will demonstrate sensitivity and <b>perception</b> across all five assessment objectives in the course of their response.</p> <p>At the bottom of the band there will be coherence and accuracy with some <b>perception</b> but with less consistency and evenness.</p>
	AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• perceptive exploration of connections across literary texts arising out of generic study</li> </ul>	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• perceptive understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task</li> <li>• assuredness in the connection between those contexts and the genre studied</li> </ul>	
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• perceptive understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task</li> <li>• assured engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used</li> </ul>	
	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• perceptive, assured and sophisticated argument in relation to the task</li> <li>• assured use of literary critical concepts and terminology; mature and impressive expression</li> </ul>	
<p>Band 4 <b>Coherent/ Thorough</b> <b>16-20 marks</b></p> <p>‘<b>Coherence</b>’ 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>‘<b>Thoroughness</b>’ is shown when students write carefully, precisely and accurately.</p>	AO5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• thorough engagement with the debate set up in the task</li> </ul>	<p>This band is characterised by <b>coherent</b> and <b>thorough</b> 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 <b>coherent</b> and <b>thorough</b> argument across all five 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 <b>coherence</b> and accuracy.</p>
	AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• logical and consistent exploration of connections across literary texts arising out of generic study</li> </ul>	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• thorough understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task</li> <li>• coherence in the connection between those contexts and the genre studied</li> </ul>	
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• thorough understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task</li> <li>• thorough engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used</li> </ul>	
	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• logical, thorough and coherent argument in relation to the task where ideas are debated in depth</li> <li>• appropriate use of literary critical concepts and terminology; precise and accurate expression</li> </ul>	

<p>Band 3 <b>Straightforward/ Relevant</b> 11-15 marks</p> <p>‘<b>Straightforward</b>’ work is shown when students make their ideas in relation to the task clearly known.</p> <p>‘<b>Relevant</b>’ work is shown when students are focused on the task and use detail in an appropriate and supportive way.</p>	AO5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• straightforward engagement with the debate set up in the task</li> </ul>	<p>This band is characterised by <b>straightforward</b> and <b>relevant</b> 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 <b>straightforward</b> understanding in the course of their argument. Ideas will be developed <b>relevantly</b>.</p> <p>At the bottom of the band there will be flashes of <b>relevant</b> understanding with evidence of <b>straightforward</b> thinking.</p>
	AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explores connections across literary texts arising out of generic study in a straightforward way</li> </ul>	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• straightforward understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task</li> <li>• relevant connections between those contexts and the genre studied</li> </ul>	
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• straightforward understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task</li> <li>• relevant engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used</li> </ul>	
	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sensibly ordered ideas in a relevant argument in relation to the task</li> <li>• some use of literary critical concepts and terminology which are mainly appropriate; straightforward and clear expression</li> </ul>	
<p>Band 2 <b>Simple/Generalised</b> 6-10 marks</p> <p>‘<b>Simple</b>’ work is shown when students write in an unelaborated and basic way in relation to the task.</p> <p>‘<b>Generalised</b>’ work is shown when students write without regard to particular details.</p>	AO5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• simple and generalised response to the debate set up in the task</li> </ul>	<p>This band is characterised by <b>simple</b> and <b>generalised</b> work which is mainly linked to the task.</p> <p>At the top of the band students will demonstrate a basic <b>generalised</b> understanding in the course of their answer. Ideas will be developed in a <b>simple</b> way.</p> <p>At the bottom of the band there will be inconsistency, but the beginnings of a <b>simple</b> and <b>generalised</b> understanding.</p>
	AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• simple exploration of connections across literary texts arising out of generic study</li> </ul>	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• simple understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task</li> <li>• generalised connections between those contexts and the genre studied</li> </ul>	
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• simple understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task</li> <li>• generalised engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used</li> </ul>	
	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a simple structure to the argument which may not be consistent but which does relate to the task</li> <li>• generalised use of literary critical concepts and terminology; simple expression</li> </ul>	

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

**Section A**

**Either**

0	1
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***The Nun's Priest's Tale* – Geoffrey Chaucer**

Explore the view that 'in *The Nun's Priest's Tale* the funny aspects are overshadowed by the serious moral lessons which emerge'.

In your answer you need to analyse closely Chaucer's authorial methods and include comment on the extract below and other relevant parts of the poem.

**[25 marks]**

**Some possible content** is given below. It suggests some of the ways the Assessment Objectives might be addressed. Some ideas will inevitably address more than one AO.

Examiners must also remember that because students have read and studied *The Nun's Priest's Tale* through the lens of **comedy**, the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

Given that this is an **open book** exam, textual references to support comments about the ways meanings are shaped in relation to the task will be expected to be specific and accurate.

Please refer to pages 4–6.

**AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations**

**With respect to meanings and interpretations:**

**Students may choose to look at both sides of the debate. It is the quality of the student's response that matters.**

Some students might consider:

- the seriousness of the moral which has a universal appeal about not succumbing to flattery and folly, the significance of which outweighs the funny events which precede it
- the placing of the central moral point at the end of the tale which suggests its significance to the meanings of the story and foregrounds the serious (rather than funny) aspects
- the inclusion of moral points during the story - such as not being swayed by superstition – which contribute to the sense that this is, on balance, to be seen as a moral tale rather than a funny one
- how the comic moments are overshadowed by the authoritative voice of the Nun's Priest at the end which implores the reader to take the moral seriously
- the references to religion which lend a weight to the moral, emphasising its importance over and above the humorous elements of the tale
- etc

Some students might consider:

- that the more memorable aspects are the humorous events eg the comic drama of chase sequence, the hilarious mundanity of marital relationships, the ridiculous strutting cockerel
- how the sheer amount of funny events exceeds the relatively minor nature of serious content – the moral seems to be a brief and superficial afterthought - leaving the reader to judge the tale as a comic rather than serious story

- how the ironic narrative voice and its invocations are so clearly over-dramatised that any supposedly serious parts are undercut – the delivery of the moral itself seems funny
- the absurdity of the use of animals which prevents the moral being taken seriously eg the ridiculous notion of birds discussing complex ideas and beliefs
- etc

#### **AO4 Explore connections across literary texts**

**With respect to significance of connections with the comic genre, focus might be on:**

- how comic texts contain serious moments where lessons are learned as seen in Chauntecleer and Russell's acquisition of self-knowledge about their own failings
- the function of comedic texts to offer moral instruction as seen in the Nun's Priest's invocation to his audience(s) to accept the wisdom of the tale
- the comedic aspect of amusement as seen in the silly pride of the strutting cockerel and the birds' ridiculous conversation about laxatives which are funny rather than serious
- the comedic aspect of trickery as seen in the hilarious duping of both Chauntecleer and Russell which although part of the moral lesson is funny rather than serious in nature
- etc

#### **AO3 Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received**

**With respect to significance of contexts in relation to the task, focus might be on:**

- the context of morality as seen in the lessons learned by the characters and the Nun's Priest drawing attention to the moral instruction offered by the story
- the context of religion as seen in the explicit links made by Chauntecleer and the Nun's Priest to God and St Paul as sources of wisdom
- the context of gender seen in the ridiculous (rather than serious) events and conversation of Chauntecleer and Pertelote
- the literary context seen in the amusing satire on courtly love and the allegorical use of animals in humorous events and actions, which although they lead to the moral, are weighted towards funny rather than serious content
- etc

#### **AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts**

**With respect to authorial method in relation to the task, focus might be on:**

- the position of the extract at the resolution of the tale where the moral is offered, death is averted and the protagonist and antagonist reflect on lessons learned
  - in the extract: the use of the animals' dialogue to release the moral lesson, the voice of the Nun's Priest explicitly drawing attention to the wisdom which emerges, the irony in the narrator's heavy-handed address which contrasts with the absurdity of the situation, the religious references and language which reinforce the moral, eg 'Seint Paul', 'Taketh the fruit', 'Amen'
  - in the wider tale: the retelling of a pre-existing allegory where moral/serious/funny aspects are given different emphasis, eg the inclusion of Chauntecleer's philosophising which appears absurd, the elements of the narrative which add tension and lead to the moral ending, eg the role of the antagonist, the chase sequence, the dramatic escape which might be seen as funny
  - the amusing dialogue between the birds, the (at times) ironic voice of the Nun's Priest, the hilarious description of the strutting cockerel, the exclamatory voices and listing of pursuers in the chase sequences, language relevant to serious or funny aspects in the tale
-

**AO1 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
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and terminology
- technical accuracy

**Accept any valid interpretations, any valid discussion of context and any valid discussion of authorial methods.**

Or

**0 2** *Poetry Anthology: Comedy*

Explore the view that in *Poetry Anthology: Comedy*, the poets present the disappointment and frustration felt by female characters as no laughing matter.

You must refer to *My Rival's House* and **at least** one other poem.

In your answer you need to analyse closely the poet's authorial methods and include comment on the extract below.

**[25 marks]**

**Some possible content** is given below. It suggests some of the ways the Assessment Objectives might be addressed. Some ideas will inevitably address more than one AO.

Examiners must also remember that because students have read and studied *Poetry Anthology: Comedy* through the lens of **comedy**, the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

Given that this is an **open book** exam, textual references to support comments about the ways meanings are shaped in relation to the task will be expected to be specific and accurate.

Please refer to pages 4–6.

**AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations**

**With respect to meanings and interpretations:**

**Students may choose to look at both sides of the debate. It is the quality of the student's response that matters.**

Some students might consider:

- how disappointment and frustration, rather than provoking laughter, cause the reader to feel sadness or sympathy towards female characters eg the narrator in *My Rival's House* who is trapped in her situation, the disregard felt by Tam's wife, the lack of choice experienced by the female in *Not My Best Side*, the loneliness of Mrs Sisyphus
- how the resulting hatred and bitterness felt by females is anything but funny, and may lead readers to wonder if some poems can accurately be termed 'comedic' eg the self-aware narrator of *My Rival's House* wishing for the demise of her mother-in-law, Mrs Sisyphus' intended violence towards her husband
- how female frustration and disappointment highlights serious issues eg the power imbalance between partners in *Mrs Sisyphus*, the lack of choice for females as seen in *Not My Best Side*, the damaging effects of male misbehaviour in *Tam o'Shanter*, the corrosive experiences of family and female relationships in *My Rival's House*
- the manner in which female characters sadly accept their disappointment and frustration which undercuts any humorous aspects, eg the matter-of-fact way the female narrator accepts her future in *Not My Best Side*, the impotence of Mrs Sisyphus
- etc

Some students might consider:

- how the frustration felt in *My Rival's House* is so extreme that it provokes uncomfortable laughter - the gap between the repressed acrimony and the public deference of the narrator is painfully funny
- the recognisable comedic stereotype of the angry wife whose disappointment at her partner is presented in a funny way eg Tam's 'sulky sullen dame' who nurses 'her wrath to keep it warm', the absurdly intense anger of Mrs Sisyphus – both characters whose frustration at their situation results in humorously emotional outbursts/behaviour
- how the female narrator in *Not My Best Side* blithely accepts the disappointment of the boy's victory in a lively, resourceful way – her practical manner and voice makes the reader laugh, given her supposed powerlessness and youth
- the voices and language of the female narrators which express disappointment and frustration in humorous ways eg the bitterly sarcastic narrator in *My Rival's House* who refers to her rival as 'Queen bee', the hilarious fury of Mrs Sisyphus as she imitates her husband's 'Mustn't shirk', the entertainingly juvenile voice of the girl in *Not My Best Side* who 'doesn't much fancy' the boy, the entertaining and playful frustration of the female in *The Flea* who tires of the speaker's argument
- etc

#### **AO4 Explore connections across literary texts**

**With respect to significance of connections with the comic genre, focus might be on:**

- the comedic aspect of excessive emotions such as disappointment and frustration and how they may – or may not – give rise to laughter, eg the narrator's discontent at her mother-in-law's persistence in *My Rival's House*
- the comedic aspect of gender stereotypes, eg Lochhead's reworking of the mother-in-law joke from the point of view of the daughter-in-law (rather than son-in-law), the angry, marginalised wives in *Tam o'Shanter* and *Mrs Sisyphus*, the practical, sexually aware female in *Not My Best Side*
- the comedic aspect of amusement eg the entertaining manner in which the female in *Not My Best Side* reveals her disappointment at the boy's potentially bad skin
- the function of comedic texts to reveal truths, eg the frustrations of power imbalances in relationships, the lack of choice for females, the centrality of men to female (un)happiness
- etc

#### **AO3 Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received**

**With respect to significance of contexts in relation to the task, focus might be on:**

- the gender context as seen in the rivalry between women in the extract over the ownership of the male, the various representations of females as emotional, practical, and sexual, the role of men in causing female frustration
  - the context of power, eg the female's impotence in *Mrs Sisyphus*, the apparent entrapment and rescue of the female in *Not My Best Side*
  - the marital context as seen in Kate's role as a scolding wife and Tam's disregard for her advice
  - the familial contexts as seen in *My Rival's House* where the nature of family ties give rise to frustration
  - etc
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**AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts**

**With respect to authorial method in relation to the task, focus might be on:**

- in the extract: the bitter voice of the narrator who remarks ‘oh how close/this family’, the self-aware way she confesses to the reader, sarcastic epithets eg ‘Lady of the house’, the final two lines whose arrangement suggests the narrator’s anger, references to ‘salt’ and ‘sour’ which capture the narrator’s frustration
- in the wider poem: the use of the mother-in-law as an antagonising character and the link to the title, the setting of the house and the discomfort the narrator feels there, the sarcastic references to perfection and the annoyingly pristine, superficial nature of the adornments which act as metaphor, the contrast between the narrator’s inner voice and her public deference, the repeated ‘s’ sounds which replicate the bitterness of the narrator
- in other poems: range of voices eg the frustrated, angry (but possibly funny) voice of Mrs Sisyphus, the upbeat, conversational voice of the female in *Not my Best Side* which causes laughter in the matter-of-fact acceptance of disappointment, the narrator’s voice in *Tam o’Shanter* which sardonically describes Kate’s frustration
- use of backstories and recounted dialogue to reveal the source of frustration and disappointment, eg the recount of the couple’s argument to show anger and frustration in *Mrs Sisyphus*, the references to the attributes of the dragon and George which shed light on the narrator’s disappointment, the narrator’s recount of Kate’s disparaging words to Tam and his subsequent ignorance of them
- resolutions which reveal that disappointment and frustrations abate or continue, eg the downbeat ending of *Mrs Sisyphus* which suggest that there will be no happy ending to her experience and her frustration will linger, the ending of *Not My Best Side* where George’s pompous and possibly sinister voice implies that the narrator’s blithe acceptance of her disappointment is misplaced
- relevant language details which show disappointment and frustration, eg the comparison of Kate’s anger to ‘a gathering storm’, the use of expletives and exclamatories in *Mrs Sisyphus*, conversational words in *Not My Best Side* to indicate sanguine acceptance of disappointment
- etc

**AO1 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
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and terminology
- technical accuracy

**Accept any valid interpretations, any valid discussion of context and any valid discussion of authorial methods.**

Or

**0 3** *Betjeman selection – John Betjeman*

Explore the view that ‘the endings of Betjeman’s poems provide enjoyment and a feel-good factor’.

You must refer to *A Subaltern’s Love Song* and **at least one** other poem.

In your answer you need to analyse closely Betjeman’s authorial methods and include comment on the extract below.

**[25 marks]**

**Some possible content** is given below. It suggests some of the ways the Assessment Objectives might be addressed. Some ideas will inevitably address more than one AO.

Examiners must also remember that because students have read and studied *Betjeman selection* through the lens of **comedy**, the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

Given that this is an **open book** exam, textual references to support comments about the ways meanings are shaped in relation to the task will be expected to be specific and accurate.

Please refer to pages 4–6.

**AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations**

**With respect to meanings and interpretations:**

**Students may choose to look at both sides of the debate. It is the quality of the student’s response that matters.**

Some students might consider:

- the uplifting effect of the comedic ending in the extract where the characters become engaged and a harmonious resolution leaves the reader feeling upbeat
- the light-hearted, pleasing nature of the love story told in the extract and the reader’s enjoyment of, and identification with, the blithe narrative voice
- the enjoyably unusual situation of the narrator at the end of *The Licorice Fields at Pontefract* – the light-hearted description of his submissiveness and the playful, feel-good nature of the love story’s conclusion which leaves the reader with an upbeat feeling
- the uplifting religious sentiments at the end of *Christmas* which leave the reader feeling a sense of universal joy
- the hilarity of the comic accident at the end of *Hunter Trials* where the silly voice of the narrator and her reaction to her fate creates enjoyment for the reader
- etc

Some students might consider:

- the inclusion of the narrator’s uncertainty about the ‘ominous dancing’ and the odd rapidity of the engagement in the extract which slightly undercuts any enjoyment
- the downbeat endings of *Late-Flowering Lust* and *On A Portrait of a Deaf Man* with their focus on death and ageing which depress the reader rather than generating positive feelings – no feel-good factor here
- the disappointing sense that boorish people succeed as shown in the endings of *Executive* and

- Advertising Pays* which undermines any enjoyment derived from the poems' satirical qualities
- the frustration and despair of the narrator at the end of *Senex* which makes the reader feel pity rather than enjoyment
  - the endings of *Slough*, *Upper Lambourne*, *The Arrest of Oscar Wilde at the Cadogan Hotel* and other poems which don't suggest joy or a feel-good factor, but generate other feelings eg release, reflectiveness, fear
  - etc

#### **AO4 Explore connections across literary texts**

**With respect to significance of connections with the comic genre, focus might be on:**

- the comedic aspect of happy endings which generate positive feelings as seen in the (probable) enjoyment generated by the harmonious resolution in the extract
- how events in comedic texts are often related in a light-hearted manner which contribute to the reader's enjoyment as seen in the jaunty, engaging voice in the extract
- how some comedic texts end on a more ambivalent note and invite the reader to reflect on less positive ideas which emerge, eg the judgmental, selfish attitudes of *In Westminster Abbey*
- the presence of darker elements in the endings of some comedic texts which undercut any feel-good factor as seen in the presence of death in *On A Portrait of a Deaf Man*, the references to 'razors and knives' in *An Edwardian Sunday*, *Broomhill*, *Sheffield*
- etc

#### **AO3 Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received**

**With respect to significance of contexts in relation to the task, focus might be on:**

- the context of human affections as seen in the positive/negative emotions associated with desire in *A Subaltern's Love Song* and *Senex*
- social context as represented in the depiction of the jolly upper middle class world of Joan Hunter Dunn and the world the narrator will enter upon marriage
- the context of mortality as seen in the depressing experiences in *Late-Flowering Love*
- the context of power as shown in the attitudes of the narrators in *Executive* and *Advertising Pays* which might be less enjoyable to the reader
- the context of religious and secular attitudes as seen in *Christmas* which could be seen as uplifting

#### **AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts**

**With respect to authorial method in relation to the task, focus might be on:**

- the position of the extract at the end of *A Subaltern's Love Song* where the literal and metaphorical journey of the couple ends in happiness for them and (possible) joy for the reader
  - in the extract: the cheerful, excited voice of the narrator which engages the reader with its exclamatory nature and idealising of the love interest, the setting with its positive pastoral references, the lively rhythm and use of couplets which convey excitement, the time and information gap before the final couplet which causes the reader to smile
  - in other poems: the variety of resolutions and the positioning of characters in them which might cause enjoyment or otherwise for the reader, eg the downbeat nature of the protagonist's capture in *The Arrest of Oscar Wilde at the Cadogan Hotel*, the narrator's oxymoronic invocations to 'friendly bombs' in *Slough*, the injury to the narrator in *Hunter Trials*
  - the various voices which create positivity or more ambivalent responses in the reader, eg the uplifting, celebratory voice of *Christmas*, the selfish voice of *In Westminster Abbey*, the despairing
-

voice of *Senex*

- the ironic contrast and bathos seen in the light-hearted references and less positive events, eg the mention of underwear and ‘buttocks’ alongside religion and death in *Senex*
- the use of rhyme and rhythm which convey a sense of positivity or otherwise, eg the galloping rhythm and alternate rhyme of *Hunter Trials* which create excitement despite the narrator’s injury, the light-hearted rhythm of *Late-Flowering Lust* which contrasts ironically with the macabre subject matter
- relevant language details such as references to religion in *Christmas* and *Senex*, references to ‘death’, ‘frightful pain’ and ‘disgust’ in *Late-Flowering Lust*

**AO1 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
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and terminology
- technical accuracy

**Accept any valid interpretations, any valid discussion of context and any valid discussion of authorial methods.**

**Section B**

**Either**

**0 4** ***Emma* – Jane Austen**

Explore the view that the parts of the story where characters experience embarrassment and discomfort are always funny.

Remember to include in your answer relevant analysis of Austen’s authorial methods.

**[25 marks]**

**Some possible content** is given below. It suggests some of the ways the Assessment Objectives might be addressed. Some ideas will inevitably address more than one AO.

Examiners must also remember that because students have read and studied *Emma* through the lens of **comedy**, the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

Given that this is an **open book** exam, textual references to support comments about the ways meanings are shaped in relation to the task will be expected to be specific and accurate.

Please refer to pages 4–6.

**AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations**

**With respect to meanings and interpretations:**

**Students may choose to look at both sides of the debate. It is the quality of the student’s response that matters.**

Some students might consider:

- Emma’s embarrassment when her matchmaking schemes and misunderstandings come to light, which causes amusement for the reader given her arrogant assumption of her superior awareness of relationships
- the discomfort experienced by Mr Woodhouse at all manner of things – Isabella’s marriage, draughts, illness – which entertain the reader on account of his comic fussiness
- the painfully funny scene between Emma and Mr Elton in the coach and both characters’ mortification which amuses the reader on account of the social embarrassment suffered
- Emma’s discomfort at having to defer to Mrs Elton at the ball which makes the reader smile at Emma’s grudging acceptance of her social status
- etc

Some students might consider:

- the embarrassment and discomfort felt by Emma in the coach with Mr Elton provokes a sense of concern at the possible danger and fear felt by her, rather than any feeling of amusement on the reader’s behalf
- how moments of discomfort are far from joyful for the reader – the discomfort experienced at Box Hill, Jane Fairfax’s discomfort regarding Frank Churchill provokes sympathy rather than amusement
- how moments of discomfort are at best superficially amusing and the issues behind such moments are more serious eg the quarrel Emma has with Mr Knightley about Harriet’s refusal of Robert Martin

- how Emma's treatment of Miss Bates and Harriet's upset are not funny or amusing at all and likely to cause the reader to react sympathetically
- etc

#### **AO4 Explore connections across literary texts**

**With respect to significance of connections with the comic genre, focus might be on:**

- how embarrassment and discomfort in comedic texts provoke cruel or cringing laughter as seen in Emma and Mr Elton's awkward experience in the coach
- the comedic aspect of amusement as seen in the inclusion of events which entertain the reader on account of discomfort endured by characters
- how comedy focuses on the foibles of likeable characters and causes the audience to laugh fondly at human emotions as seen in the reader's amusement at Emma's embarrassment and Mr Woodhouse's fastidiousness which leads to entertaining moments
- etc

#### **AO3 Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received**

**With respect to significance of contexts in relation to the task, focus might be on:**

- the contexts of love and desire as seen in Emma's matchmaking skills and the entertainingly embarrassing moments which arise from these emotions
- the context of human affection and how such feelings can give rise to discomfort and embarrassment as seen in Mr Elton's advances towards Emma
- the social context in the world of the novel where status and role give rise to discomfort as seen in Emma's uncomfortable acceptance of Mrs Elton's prominence at the ball, Jane Fairfax's obligation to keep her relationship with Frank secret, Emma's superior position over Miss Bates
- the context of power as seen in Emma's ability to determine Harriet's relationships, the position of Frank Churchill which causes the discomfort of Jane Fairfax
- etc

#### **AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts**

**With respect to authorial method in relation to the task, focus might be on:**

- the positioning of various embarrassing moments in the story, eg the incident in the coach which the reader is led to anticipate even though Emma remains unaware of the feelings of Mr Elton
  - the narrative voice which directs the reader to laugh at or feel sympathy for characters experiencing discomfort, eg the gently mocking yet sympathetic attitude adopted towards Mr Woodhouse and his physical ailments
  - settings where embarrassing events occur eg the enclosed interior of the coach which heightens the tension and the inescapable nature of the humiliation
  - the resolution of the story in which the marriages (rather than anything embarrassing) provide the reader with an entertaining ending
  - dialogue which leads to feelings of discomfort eg Emma and Mr Knightley's dispute in Chapter 8 where he dismisses her actions towards Harriet as 'errant nonsense'
  - relevant language details, eg [Emma] 'was really feeling uncomfortable', Mr Woodhouse's references to 'head-aches and palpitations'
-

**AO1 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
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and terminology
- technical accuracy

**Accept any valid interpretations, any valid discussion of context and any valid discussion of authorial methods.**

Or

**0 5** *Small Island* – Andrea Levy

Explore the view that ‘Bernard Bligh is nothing more than a figure of fun – a character to be laughed at.’

Remember to include in your answer relevant analysis of Levy’s authorial methods.

**[25 marks]**

**Some possible content** is given below. It suggests some of the ways the Assessment Objectives might be addressed. Some ideas will inevitably address more than one AO.

Examiners must also remember that because students have read and studied *Small Island* through the lens of **comedy**, the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

Given that this is an **open book** exam, textual references to support comments about the ways meanings are shaped in relation to the task will be expected to be specific and accurate.

Please refer to pages 4–6.

**AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations**

**With respect to meanings and interpretations:**

**Students may choose to look at both sides of the debate. It is the quality of the student’s response that matters.**

Some students might consider:

- the use of Queenie’s voice which often portrays Bernard as a fool, causing amusement for the reader in the mockery and lampooning of her husband
- the disparaging details about Bernard’s appearance, dullness and lack of sexual prowess which cause the reader to laugh at his shortcomings
- the attitude of Bernard towards black people and Jews, which although racist makes the reader see him as the butt of the joke – Levy invites the reader to see his views as foolish and a fit subject for mockery
- Bernard’s cuckolding which makes him the subject of cruel, but justified laughter – the reader laughs at his comeuppance and loss of face
- the ending of the novel where his begrudging acceptance of Gilbert causes the reader to laugh at his apparent volte face or laugh – possibly pleasantly - at his apparently transforming views
- etc

Some students might consider:

- Bernard’s voice and the way he gives his views on race which aren’t funny but offensive
- Bernard’s unfulfilling marriage to Queenie which isn’t a cause for laughter but for sympathy eg his cuckolding, his tears when the early courtship nearly ends
- the revulsion caused by Bernard’s conduct with the prostitute and perhaps pity for his remorse in the aftermath – both of which are no cause for laughter
- his sad experiences during the war, eg the fire at the basha which makes the reader feel pity for Bernard
- the way he appears to accept Queenie’s infidelity and comes to respect Gilbert which invites the

reader to admire rather than mock Bernard

- etc

#### **AO4 Explore connections across literary texts**

**With respect to significance of connections with the comic genre, focus might be on:**

- how comedic texts include antagonising characters who, whilst causing mischief or unpleasantness, can also be figures of fun as seen in Bernard's attitude towards Gilbert, which is often presented in a manner which makes him appear foolish
- the comedic aspect of mockery as seen in the detailing of Bernard's insipid character and sexual shortcomings which cause amusement for the reader
- the inclusion of sad experiences in comedic texts which force the reader to re-evaluate characters, eg the trauma Bernard experiences during war time such as the fire at the basha and the death of his father which cause pity on the part of the reader
- the comedic aspect of endings which suggest positive outcomes - although Bernard suffers (a possibly justifiable) comeuppance, he is in the process of changing for the better, perhaps causing the reader to laugh in a knowing way
- etc

#### **AO3 Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received**

**With respect to significance of contexts in relation to the task, focus might be on:**

- the context of race as seen in Bernard's offensive attitudes towards black people and his words to Gilbert which may not be a cause for laughter
- the context of love and desire, eg the portrayal of Bernard's sex life which might cause laughter or pity, his cuckolding by Michael Roberts
- the context of marriage as seen in his unfulfilling life with Queenie, his disappearance in the war, his downbeat return home and his knowledge of his wife's infidelity – some of which might cause an uneasy laughter
- the context of war as seen in the disruptive effect conflict has upon Bernard and the pitiable experiences he has which might cause the reader to sympathise rather than laugh
- etc

#### **AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts**

**With respect to authorial method in relation to the task, focus might be on:**

- Queenie's comically disparaging voice which recounts her experiences with Bernard and make him appear a source of laughter for the reader, eg describing his kiss as a 'peck from a chicken's beak'
- the use of different perspectives and voices which show Bernard in different lights, eg his own clipped narrative voice which invites the reader to see beyond his emotionally reduced accounts and possibly extend their sympathy at moments of sadness
- the contrast between the Bernard we see near the beginning of the story and the more developed character at the end – the sequence of events and the placing of those actions which make him more sympathetic towards the end of the narrative
- the use of dialogue to reveal Bernard's attitudes, eg 'They'd be happier among their own kind', 'I'm sorry I haven't been a better husband to you' – words which might provoke revulsion or sympathy
- relevant language details which reveal his offensive attitudes, similes to describe his body eg 'slippery as a greasy sausage', his imperatives to Gilbert eg 'Get your filthy hands off my wife'

**AO1 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
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and terminology
- technical accuracy

**Accept any valid interpretations, any valid discussion of context and any valid discussion of authorial methods.**

Or

**0 6** *Wise Children* – Angela Carter

Explore the view that ‘the reader has to like Peregrine – he brings delight and magic whenever he appears in the novel’.

Remember to include in your answer relevant analysis of Carter’s authorial methods.

**[25 marks]**

**Some possible content** is given below. It suggests some of the ways the Assessment Objectives might be addressed. Some ideas will inevitably address more than one AO.

Examiners must also remember that because students have read and studied *Wise Children* through the lens of **comedy**, the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

Given that this is an **open book** exam, textual references to support comments about the ways meanings are shaped in relation to the task will be expected to be specific and accurate.

Please refer to pages 4–6.

**AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations**

**With respect to meanings and interpretations:**

**Students may choose to look at both sides of the debate. It is the quality of the student’s response that matters.**

Some students might consider:

- Dora’s voice which casts him as an adventurous, exuberant and generous character who upstages his brother – possibly the most interesting character in the text and one whose role makes him attractive to the reader
- his larger-than-life appearance, both as a man of physical stature and the manner in which his fleeting arrivals are often accompanied by drama, present-giving or magical events
- how his appearances have a sense of carnival - at the end of the text he is accompanied by appearance of butterflies which involve literal magic but also a sense of performance and mystery, his magical production of Tiffany and then the twins at the end of the novel
- his range of activities and jobs – soldier, magician, oilman, secret serviceman (possibly) - which make him appear talented and attractive to both Dora and the reader
- the suggestion of his roguishness and sexual dalliances which makes him interesting to the reader, causing a sense of delight when his intrigues are suggested
- etc

Some students might consider:

- the suggestion of his sexual involvement with his (possible) 13-year-old daughter which casts him as an incestuous paedophile rather than as a character who brings delight
- the ending of the text where he has sex with Dora, which is repulsive rather than delightful
- his irresponsibility and lack of engagement with the ‘real world’ – Dora reminds him that the carnival must end, yet he disappears at the end – which makes him seem dislikeable rather than delightful
- his rejection by Saskia and Imogen which seem to take the gloss off his heroic status and chimes with the reader’s view that he is irresponsible and only superficially interesting

- the suggestion that he may have fathered Dora and Nora, and possibly Tristram and Gareth which suggests that he is a lothario who shows little concern for his actions and responsibilities – he's cruel and selfish rather than a character who brings delight to the reader
- etc

#### **AO4 Explore connections across literary texts**

**With respect to significance of connections with the comic genre, focus might be on:**

- the comedic aspect of the heroic protagonist who appears to enjoy success and is liked by characters and readers alike, as seen in Peregrine's range of talents, his careers and the manner in which Dora describes and regards him when he appears
- the comedic aspect of bizarre, fantastical events as seen in Peregrine's production of the twins at the end of the novel which make him appear magical
- the carnival nature of Peregrine's life and the elements of magical realism in his actions which contribute to his being seen as a character who brings delight
- the inclusion of less wholesome or troubling elements in comedic texts as seen in Peregrine's philandering and the suggestion that he has committed incest and paedophilia
- the comic aspect of the grotesque as seen in Peregrine and Dora's coupling which might be seen as foul rather than delightful

#### **AO3 Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received**

**With respect to significance of contexts in relation to the task, focus might be on:**

- the context of human affections as seen in Peregrine's relationships and sexual activities
- the moral context as seen in his supposed sexual relationship with his underage daughter
- the context of gender and feminism as seen in Peregrine's apparent power which is then shown to fade at the end
- the familial context as seen in the suggested paternity issues surrounding Peregrine and his complex relationship with his possible offspring, the suggestion that he fails to live up to his role as father
- the literary context of magic realism and the carnival events and actions of Peregrine in the novel, his magic tricks, his unexpected appearances which have a thrilling quality
- etc

#### **AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts**

**With respect to authorial method in relation to the task, focus might be on:**

- the structural appearances of Peregrine in certain points of the story – his dramatic entrances which make him appear magical, his enigmatic appearance and exit at the end of the tale and the return to South America which make him appear enchanting, or possibly irresponsible
  - Dora's narrative voice whose upbeat and lively style presents Peregrine as dashing and seductive eg 'he was not the love of my life but the loves of my life at once' whilst also fondly mocking him eg 'you don't want to peg it on your birthday'
  - the naming of Peregrine which signifies wandering and the inclusion of Peregrine's backstory in Chapter 1 which explains his disappearance to America, encouraging the reader to see him as adventurous and fascinating
  - the withholding of information about Peregrine and his possible fathering of some of the characters which may make him seem an enigmatic but immoral character, the suggestion that he may have died in a plane crash followed by his subsequent and seemingly magical reappearance
-

- dialogue which makes him appear knowing and wise in a magical way, eg Peregrine's own comment that 'It's a wise child that knows its own father' and 'life's a carnival', Lady A's acknowledgement that he was 'not so much a man, more of a travelling carnival'
- relevant language referring to Peregrine's character eg 'incorrigible', 'dirty beast'

**AO1 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
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and terminology
- technical accuracy

**Accept any valid interpretations, any valid discussion of context and any valid discussion of authorial methods.**

