



A-level
ENGLISH LITERATURE B
7717/1B

Paper 1B Literary genres: Aspects of comedy

Mark scheme

June 2024

Version: 1.0 Final



2 4 6 A 7 7 1 7 / 1 B / M S

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 Examiner.

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.

No student should be disadvantaged on the basis of their gender identity and/or how they refer to the gender identity of others in their exam responses.

A consistent use of 'they/them' as a singular and pronouns beyond 'she/her' or 'he/him' will be credited in exam responses in line with existing mark scheme criteria.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from aqa.org.uk

Copyright information

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered schools/colleges for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to schools/colleges to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Copyright © 2024 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

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 their texts in front of them, so although they will be able to make specific references to structural and organisational issues, comments on other methods may be less specific.

Arriving at Marks

1. All questions are framed to address all the Assessment Objectives (AOs). Answers are marked holistically. 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 in order to discriminate and not 'bunch' scripts in the middle for safety.
4. Examiners should mark positively. Although the possible content of 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 are no right answers. 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 remain open to a student's ideas which could be unusual or unorthodox.
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 9. 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 seen the significance of the extract in relation to the overall comedy?
 - 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 debate or constructed an argument in line with the question?
- has the student referred to different parts of the play to support their views?
- has the student referred to Shakespeare'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.

Section C

14. Examiners need to bear in mind the following key points when marking questions connecting two texts:

- has the student focused on the aspect of tragedy set up in the question and referred to two texts?
- has the student engaged in a debate or constructed an argument around the two texts in line with the question?
- has the student commented on the writers' authorial methods in the two texts?
- has the student adhered to the rubric – one drama text and one other, with one of the texts being pre-1900?
- has the student given substantial coverage of two texts?
- 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











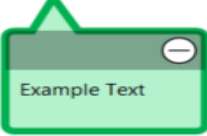






















15. Examiners should remember that annotation is directed solely to senior examiners.

16. 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.

17. The most important annotation you will use elsewhere is the tick. This will signal positive achievement in relation to the question. Ticks should be placed in the body of an answer where apt points are made. Further ticks should be given for development of points and support. Strong answers will have more ticks than weaker responses. If points are partially made the bracketed tick can be used.

18. Apart from making a summative comment in a comment box, you could use the comment box elsewhere in your marking if you need to explain your thinking to a senior marker. However, in most cases the annotation stamps will be sufficient to explain your ticks or the absence of them.

The following annotation is available for use on e-Marker 2:

Annotation Name	Toolbar Image	Details	Examples of Use on Script	Y/N
Annotation Type: Stamp				
Correct		Toolbar Tooltip: Correct		Y
Seen		Toolbar Tooltip: Seen		Y
NotRelevant		Toolbar Tooltip: Not Relevant		Y
Red Line		 Toolbar Tooltip: Red Line		Y
Green Empty Comment		Toolbar Tooltip: Green Empty Comment No Default Text - text shown in screenshot was typed into annotation by user		Y
AssessObjective1		Toolbar Tooltip: Assessment Objective 1		Y
Repetition		Toolbar Tooltip: Repetition		Y
Vague		Toolbar Tooltip: Vague		Y
Development		Toolbar Tooltip: Development		Y
SomethingHere		Toolbar Tooltip: Something here		Y
Unfocused		Toolbar Tooltip: Unfocused		Y
UnclearExpression		Toolbar Tooltip: Unclear expression		Y
LackOfClarity		Toolbar Tooltip: Lack of Clarity		Y
FactualInaccuracy		Toolbar Tooltip: Factual Inaccuracy		Y
PartiallyMadePoint		Toolbar Tooltip: Partially made point		Y
Text		Toolbar Tooltip: Needing textual support		Y

19. Please remember that scripts can go back to students, so although your audience is a senior examiner, you must express yourself temperately when writing in the comment boxes.

The assessment objectives and their significance

20. 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.

Reminder: The AOs are as follows:

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts.

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

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

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

Mark	AO	Typical features	How to arrive at a 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>	AO5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> perceptive and confident engagement with the debate set up in the task 	<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 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 perception but with less consistency and evenness.</p>
	AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> perceptive exploration of connections across literary texts arising out of generic study 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> perceptive understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task assuredness in the connection between those contexts and the genre studied 	
	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, assured and sophisticated argument in relation to the task assured use of literary critical concepts and terminology; mature and impressive expression 	

<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.</p> <p>They hold their ideas together in an intelligible way.</p> <p>'Thoroughness' is shown when students write carefully, precisely and accurately.</p>	AO5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> thorough engagement with the debate set up in the task 	<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 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 coherence and accuracy.</p>
	AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> logical and consistent exploration of connections across literary texts arising out of generic study 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> thorough understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task coherence in the connection between those contexts and the genre studied 	
	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"> 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>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>	AO5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> straightforward engagement with the debate set up in the task 	<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>
	AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explores connections across literary texts arising out of generic study in a straightforward way 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> straightforward understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task relevant connections between those contexts and the genre studied 	
	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"> 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>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>	AO5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> simple and generalised response to the debate set up in the task 	<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>
	AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> simple exploration of connections across literary texts arising out of generic study 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> simple understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task generalised connections between those contexts and the genre studied 	
	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"> 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>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>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some vague points in relation to the task and some ideas about task and text(s) • the writing is likely to be unclear and incorrect; if it is accurate the content will be irrelevant • 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 	<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>
<p>0 marks</p>		<p>No marks for response when nothing is written or where response has no connection to the text(s) or task.</p>	

0	1
---	---

The Taming of the Shrew – William Shakespeare

Read the extract below and then answer the question.

Explore the significance of this extract in relation to the comedy of the play as a whole.

Remember to include in your answer relevant analysis of Shakespeare’s dramatic 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 ideas will inevitably address more than one AO. In their answer students should refer to the significance that can be seen in the extract and how some of this significance may pertain to the comedy of the play as a whole.

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

The students are given an extract so when working on that they should quote directly to support their ideas. This is a **closed book** exam, so while it is expected that students will use quotations when writing about other parts of the play, it is also legitimate to make more general reference.

Please refer to pages 4–8.

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations

With respect to the interpretative significances that can be found, there will be a variety of interpretations here in relation to readers and audiences. Some students might comment on the choices made by directors.

Some possible ideas:

- the comedic trajectory in the extract: Petruchio’s introduction of himself to Baptista as a suitor, his comic exaggerated description of Katherina, the side-conversation with the aged suitor Gremio, the presenting of the disguised Hortensio, Baptista’s amusing amazement at Petruchio’s pursuit of Katherina, Gremio’s comic desperation for Baptista’s attention, the presenting of the disguised Lucentio, the conversation between Baptista and the disguised Hortensio, his romantic and deferential address regarding Bianca, Biondello’s comic proffering of the lute and books, Baptista’s unknowing acceptance of the disguised suitors, the subsequent progression of the taming and disguise plots
- contextualisation: the previously expressed desire of Lucentio and Petruchio to make a wife of each sister, Baptista’s insistence that Katherina is married first, the establishment of Bianca’s apparent desirability and the range of her suitors, the establishment of Katherina’s fiery personality, the hatching of the disguise plans, Petruchio’s plan to tame Katherina, the physical dispute between the sisters, Baptista’s despair at his situation
- Petruchio’s amusing overblown description of Katherina, the irony of his words in light of her behaviour, the comic reaction of Baptista
- the entertaining scale of Petruchio’s plan, his role-playing as a form of disguise, the apparently crazy nature of his desires, Petruchio as a comedic protagonist whose successful strategy is being established

- the range of disguise in the passage, the subterfuge being perpetrated in order to gain romantic and financial fulfilment, the darker issue of deceit and manipulation
- the dizzying range of disguise and the comic confusion generated as part of the spectacle and rapidity of comedy
- the audience's superior awareness of the disguise plot and Petruchio's plan, the comic gap between Petruchio's words and his actual desires
- the nature of romantic pursuit and the lengths it drives suitors to, the comic energy of sexual and financial desire, the comic contrast between the way that the romantic Lucentio sets about his task and the directness of Petruchio
- Baptista as a comic butt, the reversal of his social power where he is taken in by the various disguises and role-playing in the scene, his inability to see the tricks being played upon him, Baptista as a type of authority figure being overturned
- Gremio as a comic fool, the humour arising from his age and on-stage infirmity and his belief that he can secure Bianca's hand, his comic vying for Baptista's attention
- the comic reversal of master and servant as seen in Lucentio's donning of a subservient disguise and Tranio's elevation and amusing imitation of Lucentio's Petrarchan speech patterns
- the darker issues arising concerning male power over marriage, the male nature of the scene and its patriarchal implications, the exclusion of women from their own destiny
- etc.

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts

With respect to significance of connections with the comedic genre students might focus on:

- the comedic aspect of disguise and role-playing as seen in the various guises adopted
- the comedic aspect of relationships and courtship
- the comedic aspect of competitiveness as seen in the way the suitors try to impress Baptista
- 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 students might focus on:

- the context of power as seen in the position of Baptista as the male father figure
- the context of gender as seen in the horse trading of absent women
- the context of age as seen in the comic depiction of Gremio
- etc.

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts

With respect to significance of dramatic method students might focus on:

- the extract's place at the start of the wooing process, Petruchio's initial meeting with Baptista, the positioning of Baptista and Petruchio as two patriarchal figures having the lion's share of the scene, the exchange of dialogue between them following Petruchio's lengthy opening speech, the intervening of Gremio and the mirroring of the supply of tutors, the introduction of the silent disguised tutors and gifts presented, Tranio as the third speaking suitor completing the triumvirate
- the positioning of the audience in relation to the action, their superior knowledge of the disguises and the role-playing of Petruchio that results in Baptista being the powerful butt of the subterfuge
- the visual on-stage drama, eg the patriarchal, reserved Baptista alongside the demonstrative and energetic Petruchio, the three disguised characters, Petruchio's introduction of the silent Hortensio,

the aged Gremio as a pantaloon figure, his introduction of the silent Lucentio, the deferential manner of Tranio

- the variety of dialogue, eg the strident words of Petruchio lavishing praise on Katherina, the slightly uncertain responses of Baptista to Petruchio's words, the hurried intervening of Gremio and his wheedling words, the respectful dialogue between Tranio and Baptista
- relevant language features, eg the highly positive descriptions of Katherina, the polite words of Baptista, the ingratiating words of Gremio
- etc.

Given that this is a **closed book** exam, references to other parts of the play may be more generalised than those from the passage.

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 focus needs to be on the:

- quality of argument
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and terminology
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid discussion of interpretations, any valid discussion of contexts and any valid discussion of dramatic methods which are grounded in the passage and which relate to the play as a whole.

0 | 2

Twelfth Night – William Shakespeare

Read the extract below and then answer the question.

Explore the significance of this extract in relation to the comedy of the play as a whole.

Remember to include in your answer relevant analysis of Shakespeare’s dramatic 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 ideas will inevitably address more than one AO. In their answer students should refer to the significance that can be seen in the extract and how some of this significance may pertain to the comedy of the play as a whole.

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

The students are given an extract so when working on that they should quote directly to support their ideas. This is a **closed book** exam, so while it is expected that students will use quotations when writing about other parts of the play, it is also legitimate to make more general reference.

Please refer to pages 4–8.

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations

With respect to the interpretative significances that can be found, there will be a variety of interpretations here in relation to readers and audiences. Some students might comment on the choices made by directors.

Some possible ideas:

- the comedic trajectory of the extract: Feste’s witty and telling words to Orsino, Feste and attendants’ exit, Orsino’s instruction to the disguised Viola, the reference back to Olivia and previous wooing, Viola’s disguised reference to her own feelings, the amusingly impassioned words of Orsino, the dialogue between Orsino and Viola, the hidden clues to her true identity, her heartfelt but coded confession of her own feelings, Orsino’s repeated instruction
- contextualisation: the previous setting-up of the Orsino-Viola relationship, the complex love triangle with Olivia, the audience’s awareness of Viola’s identity and feelings, the prior establishment of Orsino’s supposed feelings for Olivia, Feste’s previous insightful comments about true character, the subsequent unravelling of the love triangle and uniting of Viola and Orsino
- the pain of Viola’s love, the misery rather than joy that it inflicts, her difficult position as go-between for the man she loves and her love rival
- the comic nature of Viola’s position in relation to Orsino, the amusing nature of her coded references, Orsino’s inability to comprehend them
- the disguise of Viola and the humour arising from it, Orsino’s assumption that he’s talking to a fellow man, his unknowing disparagement of women’s feelings in the presence of a disguised woman
- the audience’s superior knowledge of Viola’s identity and feelings, the comic material arising from the different levels of knowledge

- the entertainment generated by Orsino's position, his lack of awareness, the questionable nature of his feelings for Olivia, the amusingly exaggerated manner in which he expresses them, the irony of his dismissal of female shallowness, the continued dismantling of Orsino as a heroic figure
- the comedic undermining of the master figure, the servant's superior knowledge and feelings in contrast with her boss
- the role of Viola as a comedic heroine but also victim figure, one who is willing to do Orsino's bidding in spite of the hurt it causes her
- the continued affection of Viola for Orsino in spite of the less heroic way he is seen by the audience, a comment on the singular nature of attraction and the blindness of love
- the contrasting types of feelings presented, the depth of Viola's emotions placed against the lovesick outpourings of Orsino, the comedic contrast between Orsino's posturing and the quiet, deep love of Viola
- the scene as part of the journey towards resolution, the continuation and extension of the central comedic problem – the love triangle
- the exploration of disguise as wickedness, one which allows Viola to be near her would-be lover, but also prevents her from securing love
- Feste's role as truth-teller and witty summariser of Orsino's character, his apt remark about Orsino's fickleness which is seen later in the passage and at the end of the play
- etc.

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts

With respect to significance of connections with the comedic genre students might focus on:

- the comedic aspects of love and emotions
- the comedic aspect of disguise seen in Viola's presentation as Cesario
- the comedic aspect of temporary unhappiness as seen in Viola's manner
- 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 students might focus on:

- the context of human affections as seen in the feelings expressed
- the context of power as seen in the relative statuses of Orsino and Viola
- the context of gender as seen in the true status of Viola and the effect on her feelings
- etc.

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts

With respect to significance of dramatic method students might focus on:

- the extract's place in the centre of the play and the second time Orsino has instructed Viola to woo Olivia, the growing sense of Viola's suffering, the prescient opening words of Feste preceding the main action, the close focus on two characters, the pattern of question-and-answer that reverses as the scene progresses, the longer speeches of Orsino that give way to Viola's lengthy speech as the pathos reaches a peak, the inclusion of Viola's coded references to her true state, the anticlimactic ending where Viola is despatched
- the positioning of the audience – their superior knowledge of Viola's identity, the way this gives rise to both humour and pathos
- the on-stage spectacle, eg the tart departing words of Feste, the change in mood as the attendants withdraw, the passionate if faintly ridiculous statements of Orsino, the deferential but challenging

questions of Viola, the shift in gear as Viola’s genuinely heartfelt words are delivered, the downbeat trailing off of Viola’s words followed by the re-emergence of the passionate Orsino

- the variety of dialogue, eg Feste’s acidic and witty remarks, the commanding words of Orsino, his overblown lovesick outpourings, the question-and-answer structure between the two characters and its reversal, the melancholy dialogue of Viola
- relevant language features, eg the witty images of Feste’s description of Orsino, Orsino’s descriptions of Olivia, the poetic words of Viola
- etc.

Given that this is a **closed book** exam, references to other parts of the play may be more generalised than those from the passage.

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 focus needs to be on the:

- quality of argument
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and terminology
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid discussion of interpretations, any valid discussion of contexts and any valid discussion of dramatic methods which are grounded in the passage and which relate to the play as a whole.

0 3

***The Taming of the Shrew* – William Shakespeare**

‘A comedy with an unsatisfying ending.’

To what extent do you agree with this view of *The Taming of the Shrew*?

Remember to include in your answer relevant comment on Shakespeare’s dramatic 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 *The Taming of the Shrew* through the lens of **comedy**, the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

This is a **closed book** exam, so while it is expected that students will use quotations when writing about the play, it is also legitimate to make more general reference.

Please refer to pages 4–8.

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations

With respect to meanings and interpretations, students may choose to look at all sides of the debate or just one. It is the quality of the student’s response that matters.

Some students might consider:

- the taming of Katherina as an unsatisfying ending for audiences, her liveliness disappears and her spirit has been crushed
- Katherina’s final speech as an unsatisfying endorsement of female submission, the play as a disappointing affirmation of patriarchal structures
- the elevation of Petruchio and his deceitful, cruel methods as a model of male behaviour, his success provides a disappointing and problematic ending
- the composed, lengthy final speech, its calm, homiletic tone that sits at odds with the lively comedy preceding it creates an unsatisfying downbeat conclusion to the comic narrative
- the disappointing positioning of the other wives in the wager scene, the implication that most women are shrewish once they’ve tricked men into marriage, the ending’s easy depiction of women as either awkward or compliant, reinforcing simplistic sexist notions of gender
- the lack of a return to the action of the Induction – its absence makes the play incomplete and leaves the ending hanging
- the lack of satisfaction enjoyed by Lucentio and Hortensio in the wager scene, their loss of face (and money) and the sense that problems lie in store for them
- Gremio’s lack of wife by the end of the play, a comedic problem unresolved leaving him (and possibly the audience) dissatisfied
- etc.

Some students might consider:

- the comedic nature of the ending where a trio of marriages occur, the completion of various love stories creates a satisfying conclusion to the play for audience and characters
- the satisfaction derived by Petruchio as his plans come to fruition, his securing of Katherina as a catalyst for other marriages to occur, his story as a satisfying account of a victorious comedic hero
- the pleasure Katherina derives from her marriage by the end of the play, her journey from anger to happiness is a source of satisfaction for her and audiences, her final speech as a pleasing and fitting end to her story
- the complex nature of the ending, Katherina's final speech and her clever role-playing provide a satisfying ending for the audience, a knowing playing with genre, gender and pre-existing shrew narratives
- the pleasing reversal in the relationships of the other two marriages – the one-upmanship and non-compliance of Bianca and The Widow in the wager scene is an amusing comic touch
- etc.

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts

With respect to connections with the wider comedic genre students might focus on:

- the comedic aspect of endings where uplift occurs
- the comedic aspect of completion where endings of narratives have a sense of closure
- the comedic aspects of satisfaction where audiences derive pleasure from the endings of comedies
- etc.

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

With respect to contextual issues arising from the question and the play students might focus on:

- the context of gender as seen in the issues arising at the end of the play concerning relationships
- the context of power as seen in the relative statuses of Petruchio and Katherina at the end of the play
- the moral context as seen in the problematic aspect of the ending
- etc.

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts

With respect to dramatic method students might focus on:

- the resolution to the various comedic problems set up earlier in the play, eg the cementing of the two main partnerships in the penultimate scene to complete that part of the story, the movement in the text from seeking to securing partnerships, the final scene as a rejoinder to the marriages and a type of joke crowning the action, the three-part joke of the wager scene, the inversion of earlier positions of Katherina and Bianca, the long final speech of Katherina confirming her taming, the crowing words of Petruchio completing the action
- the dramatic spectacle of the ending, eg the kiss between Petruchio and Katherina, the busy stage in the final scene suggesting the excitement and communal aspect of the comedic ending, the banquet as a spectacle, the rapid dialogue in the wager scene, the exits of the wives, the knockabout male banter, the fast exits and entrances of Biondello, the entrance of Katherina and the placing of Petruchio's foot under her hand, her composed lengthy speech where she is central followed by Petruchio's triumphalism

- aspects of dialogue such as the banter between the husbands, the quickfire exchanges between marriage partners, the relayed offstage responses of the wives, the congratulatory words of Baptista to Petruchio, the dismissive words of Bianca and the widow to their husbands, the composed dialogue of Katherina
- relevant language details such as the imperatives of Petruchio, the pointed words of Bianca to Gremio, the range of images in Katherina's speech
- etc.

Given that this is a **closed book** exam, comment on the ways meanings are shaped may be generalised.

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 focus needs to be on the:

- quality of argument
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and terminology
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid discussion of interpretations, any valid discussion of contexts and any relevant integrated comments of dramatic methods that are embedded into the argument.

0 4 *The Taming of the Shrew* – William Shakespeare

‘Katherina and Bianca are more similar than different.’

To what extent do you agree with this view of the comic presentation of the two sisters?

Remember to include in your answer relevant comment on Shakespeare’s dramatic 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 *The Taming of the Shrew* through the lens of **comedy**, the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

This is a **closed book** exam, so while it is expected that students will use quotations when writing about the play, it is also legitimate to make more general reference.

Please refer to pages 4–8.

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations

With respect to meanings and interpretations, students may choose to look at all sides of the debate or just one. It is the quality of the student’s response that matters.

Some students might consider:

- both sisters exhibit shrewish behaviour in different phases of the play, eg Katherina’s obvious and central role as the shrew of the play’s title and Bianca’s shrewish qualities that emerge at the end of the comedy, both of which lead to amusing moments in the play
- the entertaining reversal of Bianca’s manner in the final scene and her refusal to accede to Lucentio’s demands echo the sparring of Katherina and Petruchio – the links between their roles as uncooperative women
- the comic binding together of two sisters upon whom the other’s fortunes depend generates much of the comic material between the suitors – the dependency of Bianca’s fortunes upon Katherina, the comic frustration that results and its centrality to much of the comedic narrative that follows
- both sisters are the target of male attention and desire, they are viewed as potential marriage material and their romantic lives provide the main comedic journey in the play
- both sisters are playing a role, albeit in different ways, in order to try to achieve their ends, Katherina’s aggression as a way of achieving agency, Bianca’s appearance as the ideal romantic female giving rise to the comic gap between appearance and reality
- the actions of both sisters give rise to the amusing comic truth about female methods of achieving their ends, both get what they want in the end – they are both victors
- etc.

Some students might consider:

- the amusing differences between the two sisters, Katherina's fieriness and Bianca's more conventional romantic role in the early stages of the play, the humour arising from the apparently extreme differences in their personalities – a comment on stereotypical gender roles
- the position of the sisters at the end of the narrative, with Katherina being an apparently tamed and satisfied wife and Bianca emerging as an uncooperative, headstrong wife
- the different ways the sisters behave, eg the hilarious physicality of Katherina seen in the binding of Bianca's hands alongside Bianca's more subtle manipulation of her father's sympathy
- the amusing contrast between the manner of the sisters in male company, Katherina's abrupt and confrontational dialogue providing an entertaining counterpoint to Bianca's deferential words
- the sisters' contrasting attitudes to courtship and romance in the early stages of the play, eg Bianca as a willing lover of Lucentio, her acceptance of his suit as a pointed contrast to the taming required for Katherina
- the contrasting ways in which the sisters are viewed by their father and suitors, eg Baptista's view of Katherina as a problem and Bianca as a treasure, the romantic and deferential approach of Lucentio versus the aggressive, domineering approach of Petruchio
- etc.

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts

With respect to connections with the wider comedic genre students might focus on:

- the comedic aspect of character pairings as a source of humour
- the comedic aspect of competitiveness and rivalry
- the comedic aspect of reversal as seen in the changing attitudes of the sisters
- etc.

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

With respect to contextual issues arising from the question and the play students might focus on:

- the context of gender as seen in the various stereotypical female behaviours exhibited
- the context of power as seen in the rivalry between the sisters
- the familial context
- etc.

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts

With respect to dramatic method students might focus on:

- the sequence of events involving the two sisters, eg the positioning of Bianca as the ideal woman in the opening phase of the play and the role of Katherina as the shrew, the establishment of their rivalry and physical conflict in the second act, the various actions and reactions of the sisters punctuating the central phase of the play suggesting the degrees of compliance and willingness to marry, the comic reversal at the end of the play
- the resolution of the play whereby the compliance of Katherina and Bianca's feistiness emerge, the final scene as a comic pay-off, the opposing positions of the sisters
- the dramatic energy of their individual actions and relationship, eg the wildcat behaviour of Katherina, the physical conflict, binding of Bianca's hands, Katherina striking Bianca and Petruchio, the differences in the onstage mobility and presence, the more composed manner of Katherina in the final scene, the pert posturing of Bianca in the wager scene

- aspects of dialogue such as the initial exchanges between the sisters, the aggressive words Katherina directs to Bianca, the deferential responses of Bianca, the manner of the dialogue the sisters have with their father, the more barbed responses of Bianca in the final scene, the lengthy dialogue given to Katherina in the final scene
- relevant language details such as Bianca’s polite terms of address to Katherina, the accusatory, combative words of Katherina
- etc.

Given that this is a **closed book** exam, comment on the ways meanings are shaped may be generalised.

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 focus needs to be on the:

- quality of argument
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and terminology
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid discussion of interpretations, any valid discussion of contexts and any relevant integrated comments of dramatic methods that are embedded into the argument.

0 5 *Twelfth Night* – William Shakespeare

Explore the significance of the setting of Illyria to the comedy of the play.

Remember to include in your answer relevant comment on Shakespeare’s dramatic 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 ideas will inevitably address more than one AO.

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

This is a **closed book** exam, so while it is expected that students will use quotations when writing about the play, it is also legitimate to make more general reference.

Please refer to pages 4–8.

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations

With respect to the interpretative significances that can be found, there will be a variety of interpretations here in relation to readers and audiences. Some students might comment on the choices made by directors.

Some possible ideas:

- Illyria as the setting where the action of the play occurs, where Viola and Sebastian arrive and find happiness
- Illyria as a fantastical place, an odd land where unusual events and relationships develop and flourish, a place where seasons appear mixed up
- Illyria as a world which allows love to flourish and overcome traditional boundaries – the setting as a green world where transformations occur and convention is temporarily suspended
- Illyria as a place of comic inversion where power structures are upended and power is wielded by traditionally less statusful characters over superiors, as seen in Maria’s role in the plot against Malvolio
- a place where the bounds of class and status are temporarily dissolved as seen in Olivia and Orsino’s attraction to a messenger and Sir Toby’s relationship with Maria
- a world where love’s midsummer madness influences people’s emotions and brings a temporary reversal of normal behaviour, as seen in the way Olivia’s grief gives way to skittishness at odds with her status as head of household
- Illyria as a place where normal reason is lost and where misjudgements are made, eg the ridiculous conduct of the po-faced Malvolio that leads to the hilarious sight of his yellow stockings and his mistaken assumption that he is attractive to Olivia
- the setting as a place of absurdity and subterfuge where the cross-dressed Viola attracts the attentions of Olivia and Orsino, the less conventional same-sex attraction invites reflection on the uncontrollable nature of desire
- the setting as place of riot and revelry where drunken antics and songs are performed in a grieving household against the conventions of decorum
- the anarchical world of Illyria as where accepted rules of conduct are overturned, eg the expected wise and responsible role of a knight is inverted, as seen in the drunken, silly conduct of Sir Toby and Sir Andrew

- etc.

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts

With respect to significance of connections with the comedic genre students might focus on:

- the comedic aspect of settings as places of transformation
- the comedic aspect of inversion as seen in the upturning of rules in Illyria
- the comedic aspects of love, bad behaviour, confusion and disguises that flourish in the setting
- 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 students might focus on:

- the literary context in regard to setting as a component of narrative
- the social context as seen in the rebellious actions taking place in Illyria
- context of gender as seen in the various relationships and the cross-dressing occurring in Illyria
- etc.

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts

With respect to significance of dramatic method students might focus on:

- the use of Illyria as a setting in which the events of the story take place, its function as a backdrop to the events of the narrative but also a distinctive setting embodying comedic aspects
- the various unusual events in the sequence of the play that occur in Illyria, eg the anarchic actions of Sir Toby, the temporary dissolution of expected social norms, the gradual piling up of comic confusion, the darkness and trickery climaxing in the dark room scene, the return to a type of normality in the final scene
- the resolution of the play where the comic inversion that flourishes in the world of Illyria is curtailed and normal power structures return, the fantastical aspect of Illyria where the twins are reunited and problems appear solved
- the dramatic nature of events in the world of Illyria, eg the cross-dressing that flourishes to comic effect in Illyria, the pillorying of authority figures as they pursue romance, the rebellious behaviour of Sir Toby, the transformation of Olivia, the spectacle of the twins onstage in the final scene
- relevant language details such as snatches of doggerel, exaggerated sentiments of love, reference to midsummer madness in Illyria
- etc.

In writing about setting, students automatically connect with AO2 as a feature of narrative.

Given that this is a **closed book** exam, comment on the ways meanings are shaped may be generalised.

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 focus needs to be on the:

- quality of argument
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and terminology
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid discussion of interpretations, any valid discussion of contexts and any relevant integrated comments of dramatic methods that are embedded into the argument.

0 6

Twelfth Night – William Shakespeare

Twelfth Night ends with one of Feste's songs:

'A great while ago the world begun,
With hey-ho, the wind and the rain;
But that's all one, our play is done,
And we'll strive to please you every day.' (Act 5, Scene 1)

Explore the significance of songs and music to the comedy of the play as a whole.

Remember to include in your answer relevant comment on Shakespeare's dramatic 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 ideas will inevitably address more than one AO.

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

This is a **closed book** exam, so while it is expected that students will use quotations when writing about other parts of the play, it is also legitimate to make more general reference.

Please refer to pages 4–8.

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations

With respect to the interpretative significances that can be found, there will be a variety of interpretations here in relation to readers and audiences. Some students might comment on the choices made by directors.

Some possible ideas:

- the inclusion of music and songs as part of the comedic entertainment, the variety of lyrics that connect with the ideas and atmosphere of the play
- Feste's final song as a melancholy note to end the play on, the quoted extract with its references to miserable weather contrasting with the preceding betrothals, the way it undermines the supposedly happy ending of the main characters' stories
- the final line of Feste's final song as an ironic comment on comedy – the way it conceals unhappiness, a link to the superficial partnerships seen at the end of the play, a reminder that happiness and that of the characters is an artifice
- Feste's final song as a reminder of the role of comedy and theatre to enliven things, the place of comedy as a source of amusement and that things end happily in spite of preceding events, the inconsequential nature of life's troubles that can be faced positively
- the love song 'O mistress mine' sang to the drunken knights, its references to journeys ending in lovers meeting echoing the plot events of the play, its first verse suggesting a positive image of love as a harmonious experience
- the undermining of love and youthfulness in the second verse of 'O mistress mine', the lyrics reminding the knights that happiness doesn't necessarily last and youth doesn't endure, the puncturing of the mood of drunken revelry

- the rebellious singing and carousing of Sir Toby, his amusing refusal of Maria's request to be quiet, the disjointed snatches of songs supporting the idea of twelfth night as time of revelry and non-compliance
- the singing of Sir Toby and Feste at Malvolio as a form of mockery, the comic snubbing of the authority figure, song as a form of anarchy
- Orsino's opening lines linking music and love, his fickle attitude, his desire for music to accompany his lovelorn moods, the old and antique song that accompanies his ruminations on love to Viola, the entertaining sight of a lovesick duke wallowing in sentimentality
- Orsino's ridiculous introduction to 'Come away, death' as a song about the innocence of love, a comment on his skewed view of situations and misguided thoughts on matters of the heart
- the hilariously grotesque lyrics to 'Come away, death' with its references to coffins and corpses as a counterpoint to the various love stories in the play, its clichéd Petrarchan sentiment that sharpens the view of Orsino as a lovesick fool
- Feste's comic ironic comment after performing 'Come away, death' that he enjoys singing it
- etc.

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts

With respect to significance of connections with the comedic genre students might focus on:

- the comedic aspect of songs, music and entertainment
- the comedic aspect of melancholy as seen in the lyrics of Feste's songs
- the comedic aspect of endings and Feste's final song as the last words of the play
- 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 students might focus on:

- the performance context as seen in the manner in which the songs are delivered
- the cultural context as seen in the references to eg love and death in lyrics
- the philosophical context as seen in the ruminations on life contained in lyrics
- etc.

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts

With respect to significance of dramatic method students might focus on:

- the placement of various songs in the opening and middle phases of the play, eg the romantic music accompanying Orsino's opening speech and the way it underscores his later conversation with Viola, Feste's 'O mistress mine' song in Act 2 supporting Sir Andrew's experience of love and giving another voice on a key aspect of the narrative, the disjointed, rebellious words sung in defiance of Malvolio, the melancholy Petrarchan-style lyrics parodying Orsino's lovesick mood in Act 2
- the resolution of the play: Feste's songs conclude the action and act in opposition to the comedic spirit, the song's function in returning the audience to the real world, signifying the conclusion of the holiday spirit and providing a commentary on the impermanence of happiness
- the dramatic spectacle of the songs' performance, eg the melancholy mood-breaking first song of Feste amid the drunken revelry, the anarchic snatches of lyrics aimed at Malvolio, often accompanied by dance and gesture in performance, the grave performance of 'Come away, death', the finality of the last song, sometimes performed walking into the auditorium, the communal on-stage dance that often accompanies the end of the performance

- aspects of dialogue such as the characters' reflections on the content of lyrics, eg the knights' excited request for a song followed by their more reflective comments afterwards, the angry responses of Malvolio, the grateful and melancholic responses of Orsino
- relevant language details linking the songs to key cultural references such as love, death, rain and time, aspects of rhythm and rhyme, anti-comic references
- etc.

Given that this is a **closed book** exam, comment on the ways meanings are shaped may be generalised.

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 focus needs to be on the:

- quality of argument
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and terminology
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid discussion of interpretations, any valid discussion of contexts and any relevant integrated comments of dramatic methods that are embedded into the argument.

0 7

Explore the significance of the openings of **two** comedic texts you have studied.

Remember to include in your answer relevant comment on the ways the writers have shaped meanings.

[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 ideas will inevitably address more than one AO.

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

This is a **closed book** exam, so while it is expected that students will use quotations when writing about the texts, it is also legitimate to make more general reference.

Please refer to pages 4–8.

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations

With respect to the interpretative significances that can be found, there will be a variety of interpretations here in relation to readers and audiences. Some students might comment on the choices made by directors.

Some possible ideas:

- the openings of comedic texts which set up comedic problems that drive the narrative, the establishment of central characters and their comic flaws, the presentation of amusing situations and settings that form the backdrop to the comedic narrative
- the introduction of Algernon and his flat in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, the introduction of the comic privileged world and setting up of the comedy of manners, the comic interplay between Algernon and Lane, Lane as a type of witty underling, entertaining jokes about inaccurate piano playing, excess and marriage, the introduction of Jack and the establishment of the love plot that will drive the rest of the narrative, various *bon mots*
- the introduction of the Hardcastles and their old-fashioned house in *She Stoops to Conquer*, the banter between Mr and Mrs Hardcastle, the humour arising from their opposing views about town and country, the comic names of unseen characters, the introduction of Tony as a comic fool, the comic reversal of power in his relationship with his mother, the introduction of Kate as a comedic heroine, the introduction of the marriage plot that drives the rest of the narrative, the prologue and its references to sentimental comedy
- the narrator's knowing comments on Emma's personality, the setting up of her comic flaws that prepare readers for the journey of growth seen in the rest of the novel, the introduction of marriage as a central idea in the text, the introduction of Mr Woodhouse as an amusing old fool, the introduction of Mr Knightley as the perceptive and subsequent partner for Emma, the establishment of Emma's matchmaking designs in regard to Mr Elton that later prove entertainingly disastrous
- the entertaining narrative voice of Queenie in the prologue to *Small Island*, her comic misunderstanding about Africa, the comic contrast between the mundane references to butchery and the trip, the amusing description of the African man and Graham urinating behind the bins, the setting up of ideas about race and culture, the comic shift to Hortense's pretentious voice, the contrast between her expectations of Gilbert's house and the reality, the comic misunderstandings when Hortense arrives at the dock, the description of Gilbert as a comic fool, the amusing puncturing of Hortense's expectations

- the establishment of the witty argument in *The Flea*, the ironic and irreverent attitude to the general's death in Swift's poem, the presentation of the girl in *Sunny Prestatyn* which is later undermined, the comic presentation of Tam's sullen wife and Tam as a drunken fool, the amusingly urbane talking dragon's complaint in *Not My Best Side*, the establishment of the darkly comic voices and situations in *My Rival's House* and *Mrs Sisyphus*
- the establishment of the down-at-heel setting in *The Nun's Priest's Tale* and its comic contrast, Chauntecleer's resplendent appearance and academic knowledge, the simplicity of the scene and its echoing of comedic romance narratives, the amusing and absurd presentation of Chauntecleer as a proud, talking, sexually busy cockerel, the entertaining way Pertelote is described as a debonair lady that contrasts with her later manner, the dream of Chauntecleer prefiguring the appearance of the fox as a comic villain, the Host's invitation to the Nun's Priest to tell a tale to make the heart gladden
- etc.

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts

With respect to significance of connections with the comedic genre students might focus on:

- the comedic aspect of problems as seen in the comedic situations set up in various openings
- the comedic aspect of temporary unhappiness as seen in the position of some characters in the opening phase of a text
- the comedic aspect of entertainment as seen in the amusing events, situations and characters introduced in text openings
- 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 students might focus on:

- the narrative context as seen in the function of text openings in the stories told
- the context of power as seen in the way central characters lack social, economic and personal power in the opening of a text
- the context of human affections as seen in the way the search for love and happiness are motivating forces for characters at the beginning of their journeys
- etc.

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts

With respect to significance of dramatic/authorial method students might focus on:

- openings as a major structural part of a text that introduce situation and character, eg the establishment of the lifestyles of Jack and Algernon, the initial introduction to the Hardcastles and their situation, the setting up of the comedic setting and backdrop for events
- the initiation of the main comedic problems that will develop during the texts, eg Emma's naiveté and arrogance, the issue of racial (mis)understanding and problems of emigration in *Small Island*, the setting up of Chauntecleer's skills and relationships in *The Nun's Priest's Tale*, the introduction of Tam's drunken behaviour and unwillingness to listen to Kate, the desires of the narrator of *The Flea* and the problems of Mrs Sisyphus that are established
- the initiation of a comedic journey that is played out in the remainder of the text, eg the establishment of Jack's search for stimulation and love, the Hardcastles' worries about the future of Tony and Mr Hardcastle's wishes for Kate's marriage, the position of Emma as a privileged and selfish protagonist who will subsequently transform

- various voices and dialogue, eg the bitter voices in *My Rival's House* and *Mrs Sisyphus* outlining their problems at the start of the poems, the comic voice of the narrator in *Tam o'Shanter* describing Tam's wife, the voice of Queenie in *Small Island* reflecting on her early childhood memories, the interplay between the Hardcastles and Jack and Algernon
- relevant language features, eg the description of Kate's mood, the references to town and country in *She Stoops to Conquer*, the words used to describe Emma's personality
- etc.

In writing about openings as a narrative aspect of a text, students automatically connect with AO2.

Given that this is a **closed book** exam, comment on the ways meanings are shaped may be generalised.

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 focus needs to be on the:

- quality of argument
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and terminology
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid interpretations, any valid comments on contexts and any relevant integrated comments on dramatic/authorial methods that are embedded into the argument.

0 | 8

'Protagonists in comedic literature often have flaws, for example, a tendency to lie, self-importance, a lack of self-awareness. But nobody cares about these flaws.'

To what extent do you agree with this view in relation to **two** texts you have studied?

Remember to include in your answer relevant comment on the ways the writers have shaped meanings.

[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 two texts through the lens of **comedy**, the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

This is a **closed book** exam, so while it is expected that students will use quotations when writing about the texts, it is also legitimate to make more general reference.

Please refer to pages 4–8.

AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations

With respect to meanings and interpretations, students may choose to look at all sides of the debate or just one. It is the quality of the student's response that matters.

Some students might consider:

- the flaws of characters as being amusing or inconsequential in stories where all is well at the end of the comedic journey
- the mendacity depicted in *The Importance of Being Earnest* is amusing rather than a matter for care, eg the various lies and deceptions that lead to entertaining problems as seen in the supposed death of Jack's brother causes hilarity, the happy ending of the play means that flaws are overlooked
- Marlow's inability to relate to privileged women in *She Stoops to Conquer*, his self-consciousness is an obstacle that is overcome, the happy ending that emerges where he is engaged to Kate, Tony's predilection for the pub and his joking results in amusing and inconsequential events, his ability to deceive and be resourceful gets him out of an unwanted engagement rather than presenting a serious problem
- the lack of self-perception of the protagonist in *Emma* – her misplaced belief in her matchmaking skills that leads to entertaining situations and any hurt caused by her treatment of others is only a temporary problem in the comedic narrative, the sense that she overcomes her flaws by the end of the tale and all ends well
- the pretentiousness of Hortense in *Small Island* is a source of amusement and inconsequential given that her development as a character leads to a happy outcome, Gilbert's foolish side is actually an attractive quality for a comedic character
- the flaws in the general's character in Swift's poem that provide the source for some comic comments, Tam's flaws as a drunken, easily tempted fool that leads to an entertaining ending in which he gets away with things, the hilarious pretension of the dragon in *Not My Best Side* is a light-hearted affair, the selfish work ethic shown in *Mrs Sisyphus* and the manner of narration diminishes any supposed lingering issues
- the pride of Chauntecleer in *The Nun's Priest's Tale* amuses the reader and is part of the lessons learned in the narrative, Chauntecleer's acceptance and overcoming of his flaw as part of his growth and comedic journey suggests that this flaw is amended and therefore the reader's attention doesn't linger upon it

- etc.

Some students might consider:

- the flaws of characters that remain uncorrected by the end of the story, or caused the reader to reflect upon the deeper comic truths about life and human conduct
- the lying and idleness of the upper-class characters depicted in *The Importance of Being Earnest* reveals a worrying truth that mendacity is acceptable as the characters suffer no real comeuppance, the suggestion that deceitful behaviour isn't changed makes the reader dwell on these flaws
- Marlow's inability to relate to privileged women in *She Stoops to Conquer*, raises the lingering issue of attitudes to class, Tony's stupidity and indolence is seen as a flaw by Mr Hardcastle which goes unchanged, Tony's deception of his mother to get out of an unwanted engagement gives the reader pause to reflect on the play's endorsement of these flaws
- Emma's lack of self-perception and arrogant belief in her matchmaking skills causes hurt to Harriet and Mrs Bates, the lingering sense that her social position allows her to enjoy a happy ending raises issues of privilege that linger with the reader
- the racist attitudes of Bernard and some sections of society in *Small Island* remain a source of discomfort for the reader – a flaw that can't be overlooked
- the flaws of the warmongering general in Swift's poem cause the reader a real sense of unease, Tam's flaws as a drunken, weak character go uncorrected at the ending of the poem – he gets away with things which raises lingering questions about fortune, the sad, isolated position of the wife in *Mrs Sisyphus* as a result of her husband's flaws remains – there is no happy ending for her
- the serious idea in *The Nun's Priest's Tale* that minor character flaws such as pride can result in near-death experiences is an unsettling comic truth about the random and unfair nature of life
- etc.

AO4 Explore connections across literary texts

With respect to connections with the wider comedic genre students might focus on:

- the comedic aspect of the flawed but likeable comedic protagonist
- the comedic aspect of bad or inappropriate conduct that causes amusement
- the comedic aspect of happy endings which cause readers to overlook problems and flaws
- etc.

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

With respect to contextual issues arising from the question and the play students might focus on:

- the social context as seen in the conduct and ramifications of flawed characters
- the context of power as seen in the ways in which character flaws undermine or elevate the status of characters at different points in the texts
- the moral context as seen in the questionable actions of flawed characters
- etc.

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts

With respect to dramatic/authorial method students might focus on:

- the establishment of characters' flaws in the opening phase of the text, eg the emergence of the profligate, idle qualities in the opening of *The Importance of Being Earnest* and the moments of mendacity throughout the play, the introduction of Marlow and the establishment of his inability to converse with privileged women, the immediate identification of Emma's flaws and the following exemplification of them in the narrative, the introduction and reinforcement of Gilbert's flaws at various point of his and others' narration
- the journey of the characters in the plays where their flaws are exacerbated, eg the climactic moment where Jack's lies about his brother expose him, the actions of Kate that help Marlow overcome his shyness, the climactic moment of Tam's chase where his flaws have led him to danger, the various mistakes and misjudgements made by Emma in various parts of the narrative, the story of Chauntecleer that exposes the dangers of his flaw
- the ending of narratives whereby flaws are corrected or become irrelevant, eg Marlow's overcoming of his shyness, Jack's happy ending which isn't affected by his flaw of mendacity, Hortense's development which sees her as a less pretentious character by the end, a hint that Bernard is chastened and his views challenged, Emma's maturity and resulting matrimony, Chauntecleer's escape and moral lesson, the feeling that Tam has escaped but learned little
- the use of various voices, eg Hortense's entertainingly haughty response and description of Gilbert's lodging, the narrator of Emma pointedly drawing attention to her flaws, the amusing description of Tam's lifestyle recounted by the narrator, the voice of Chauntecleer reflecting on his flaws
- relevant language features, eg Constance and Kate's initial description of Marlow's oddity, the narrator's direct reference to Tam as an uncouth drunk, Swift's condemnatory words
- etc.

Given that this is a **closed book** exam, comment on the ways meanings are shaped may be generalised.

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 focus needs to be on the:

- quality of argument
- organisation of ideas
- use of appropriate concepts and terminology
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid interpretations, any valid comments on contexts and any relevant integrated comments on dramatic/authorial methods that are embedded into the argument.