

AS

ENGLISH LITERATURE (SPECIFICATION A)

Unit 1 Texts in Context

Option C: The Struggle for Identity in Modern Literature

Friday 20 May 2016

Morning

Time allowed: 2 hours

Materials

For this paper you must have:

- an AQA 12-page answer book.

Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The **Paper Reference** is LTA1C.
- Answer **two** questions.
- You must answer:
 - the **compulsory** question in **Section A**: Contextual Linking
 - **one** question from **Section B**: Poetry.
- Do all rough work in your answer book. Cross through any work you do not want to be marked.

Information

- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 90.
- The poetry texts prescribed for this paper **may** be taken into the examination room. Texts taken into the examination must be clean: that is, free from annotation.
- You will be marked on your ability to:
 - use good English
 - organise information clearly
 - use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

Advice

- You are advised to spend about 1 hour on each question.

Section A: Contextual Linking**Answer Question 1.**

In your response to this section of the paper you must refer to your wider reading across all **three** genres (prose, poetry and drama). You may also refer to your AS coursework texts.

Question 1

0	1
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 Read the following extract carefully. It is an edited version of a letter written by the black playwright and activist Lorraine Hansberry (1930–1965). Hansberry was replying to a letter she had received from a young white college student in which he asked what she thought about the use of violence in the struggle to achieve civil rights for black Americans. The leading black activist of the time, Dr. Martin Luther King, had sworn to avoid violence.

How does the writer present her thoughts and feelings about the struggle for identity?

How far is the extract similar to and different from your wider reading in the literature of the struggle for identity? You should consider the writers' choices of form, structure and language, as well as subject matter.

[45 marks]

April 27 1962

Dear Kenneth Merryman,

I have received a great many letters from students but, I confess, not too many from 'a white farm boy living on a rich, fertile farm on the Mason-Dixon Line'¹ and so I was particularly pleased to hear from you.

Like most of my generation and, in particular, those behind my generation (I am thirty-two), I have no illusion that non-violent resistance is enough. We believe that the world is political and that political power, in one form or another, will be the ultimate key to the liberation of American Negroes and, indeed, black folk throughout the world. It is the political reality of the world without our own shores which even makes the King movement possible, in my opinion.

I think this is what the nation has to face; and, being black and a dedicated American patriot, I am glad. I think that Dr. King increasingly will have to face a forthcoming generation of Negroes who question even the restraints of his militant and, currently, progressive ideas and concepts. The pressure rises up everywhere: I think the daily press

lulls the white community falsely in dismissing the rising temper of the ghetto and what will come of it.

In the twentieth century men everywhere like to *breathe*; and the Negro citizen still cannot, you see, *breathe*. And, thus far, the intensity of our resentment has not yet permeated white society which remains, in spite of the headlines, convinced it is *our* problem.

What I am saying is that whether we like the word or not, the condition of our people dictates what can only be called revolutionary attitudes. It is no longer acceptable to allow racists to define Negro manhood – and it will have to come to pass that they can no longer define his weaponry.

I think, then, that Negroes must concern themselves with every single means of struggle: legal, illegal, passive, active, violent and non-violent. That they must harass, debate, petition, give money to court struggles, sit-in, lie-down, strike, boycott, sing hymns, pray on steps – and shoot from their windows when the racists come cruising through their communities.

The acceptance of our present condition is the only form of extremism which discredits us before our children.

This has been a conversation not an essay and I hope of some meaning to you. If you should care to reply and argue or comment about any of it I would be delighted to hear from you again.

If not, may I wish you a happy and rewarding college experience for the next four years. I don't know what field you are going into – but whatever it is, bask in the opportunity for education, won't you? Mankind has labored a long time to accumulate all that goes into the books which are awaiting you and there is so much that is beautiful and stirring and inspiring in the achievements of the human race that one ought to go through the years of formal education in a state of perpetual exhilaration. And – neglect not the arts!

Warm wishes,

(unsigned)

¹ The Mason-Dixon Line is traditionally seen as the border between America's northern and southern states.

Turn over for Section B

Section B: Poetry

Answer **one** question from this section.

In your response to this section of the paper you should consider the form, structure and language of the poems you choose to write about, as well as their subject matter.

And Still I Rise – Maya Angelou

Either

Question 2

0 2 “Angelou’s poetry explores pain and suffering but remains silent on love.”

How far do you agree with this view?

In your answer you should **either** refer to **two** or **three** poems in detail **or** range more widely through the whole selection.

[45 marks]

or

Question 3

0 3 Remind yourself of ‘In Retrospect’.

How far do you agree that this poem would make a fitting conclusion to the selection?

[45 marks]

Feminine Gospels – Carol Ann Duffy

or

Question 4

0 4 “In *Feminine Gospels*, Duffy’s most interesting female characters are weak and passive victims.”

How far do you agree with this view?

In your answer you should **either** refer to **two** or **three** poems in detail **or** range more widely through the whole collection.

[45 marks]

or

Question 5

0 5 Look again at the poem ‘The Virgin’s Memo’, which one critic has described as “a scrap of nonsense”.

To what extent do you feel that this poem would make a suitable introduction to this collection?

[45 marks]

Skirrid Hill – Owen Sheers

or

Question 6

0	6
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 How far do you agree that, in *Skirrid Hill*, Sheers' focus is on only Welsh culture and traditions?

In your answer you should **either** refer to **two** or **three** poems in detail **or** range more widely through the whole collection.

[45 marks]

or

Question 7

0	7
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 Look again at Sheers' description of the old man in 'The Wake'.

To what extent do you agree that the ways in which Sheers presents masculinity in this poem are typical of his treatment of masculinity in the collection as a whole?

[45 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS

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