

A-level

ENGLISH LITERATURE B

Paper 2A Texts and genres: Elements of crime writing

Time allowed: 3 hours

Materials

For this paper you must have:

- an AQA 12-page answer book
- a copy of the set text(s) you have studied for Section B and Section C. These texts must **not** be annotated and must **not** contain additional notes or materials.

Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The **Paper Reference** is 7717/2A.
- You must answer the question in Section A, **one** question from Section B and **one** question from Section C. Over Section B and C you must write about **three** texts: **one** poetry text, **one** post-2000 prose text and **one** further text.
- 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 75.
- You will be marked on your ability to:
 - use good English
 - organise information clearly
 - use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.
- In your response you need to:
 - analyse carefully the writers' methods
 - explore the contexts of the texts you are writing about
 - explore connections across the texts you have studied
 - explore different interpretations of your texts.

Section A

Answer the question in this section.

0	1
---	---

Explore the significance of elements of crime writing in this extract.

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed analysis of the ways the author has shaped meanings.

[25 marks]

The extract is taken from Chapter 1 of *Birdcage Walk* by Helen Dunmore, published in 2017. The story is set in late eighteenth century England and the 'he' referred to in the extract is, as yet, unidentified.

The undergrowth was still wet from last night's rain. There was a rich smell with an edge to it. He was going into the old forest which had never been cut since men lived in their hill forts and watched for their enemies coming up the river. The trees had been coppiced but no more. He knew about such things. He had an interest in antiquarianism and the men knew to bring to him any object of interest that they turned up in the digging of foundations. But those hill forts had been set on the heights and he was deep in the woods, where the trees were thickest.

She hadn't wanted to come so far, but he had told her about the nightingales, and she had put on her stout boots. There were glades, he said to her, where sunlight dropped down through the tall trees and made orchids grow.

He paused, looked at the oaks on the left of the path, the whitebeam on the right, and listened for the chink of metal on stone from the quarry. Perhaps it was still too early. He glanced behind him again. There was too much birdsong, and it muddled him, but this was the place. There was a gap in the undergrowth. He had not lied to her: there was a glade. He pushed through to it, dragging the mattock and spade. Twigs snapped at his face and he flinched.

He must have shut his eyes. When he opened them, there she was. She lay as he had left her, under a tree in the brambles and ivy. He had laid her out straight, and crossed her hands, and then he had wrapped his coat about her head. He had known that she would stiffen in a few hours, and that he would not want to see her face again. There she was. No one had come; he'd known that no one would come. It was his luck. There were no marks where he had dragged her, because he had lifted her in his arms and carried her.

This was the place. He was dry, and his heart beat hard. There would be water somewhere nearby but he could not stop to look for it now. The coat over her face was sodden with rain, and her skirts too, and her boots. There were spiders on her, and woodlice. She'd been lying there all night on her own. She could not see him now. He had pressed down her eyelids and then he had wound the coat over her face. It was a light summer coat and it moulded to her. He could not help being astonished that she was still there, even though he had placed her so carefully and marked the site in his mind so that he would be able to find it easily. He had half expected an empty glade with the first sun beginning to warm it and a cloud of gnats dancing.

He cut into the ground with his spade and carefully he sliced and lifted the sods and laid them aside. The solid sheet of limestone did not run so close to the surface here. He would be able to dig just deep enough and then when she was buried he would heap the undergrowth over her. Already he was sweating as he stripped down to his shirt and began to dig. There were lumps of stone in the soil; he took the mattock to ease them out, and then laid them aside. Earwigs ran and white grubs squirmed as the light fell on them. Flies buzzed about his head. He shut out the thought that it was she who had brought them here. It was his own sweat that drew them. The earth smelled acrid but clean too. Twice or thrice he thought he heard something and he stopped, head up, alert, sniffing the sunlit air, but it was always a woodpecker or the rustle of birds and small animals in the undergrowth. There were butterflies now, speckled ones, emerging as the air warmed. They were dancing over her. They could smell a dead thing: he knew that.

He dug and dug. He would not let his mind loose, for fear of where it might skedaddle without him. His clothes stuck to him with sweat and his head throbbed from the heat or because he had not slept. Now he was going deep and standing inside the hole he had dug, loosening more stone with the mattock. It was a fusty, crawling place he had made and fear ran over the skin of his back as he bent and lifted, bent and lifted, faster and faster now, frantic to get the job done. He did not dare to look at her. It seemed to him that she might be sitting up, unwinding the coat from about her face, and watching him out of those eyes. She would pick the twigs and dirt off her dress, and the insects. She would put the spiders aside gently. That was what she did when spiders came into the house in the autumn months: she cupped them in her hands and tipped them outside. She never minded the tickle of their legs inside her fingers.

It was deep enough now. Not as good as a sexton would have done for her, but if he laid the stones over her no fox or badger would be able to dig her up.

It was hellish work getting her into the grave. She was cold and stiff. The broken sunlight glanced over her but it could not touch her. His back burned as he knelt to pick her up, and she was heavier than she had ever been. He staggered with her to the edge of the grave. She rolled stiffly in his arms and he thought that she meant to bring him down with her. He would lose his balance and fall into the grave and she would topple in after him, pinning him there. He would never emerge.

He hated her now. She had made him hate her. He pushed and shoved until he got her in, head at one end and boots at the other. She was on her side. He had wanted to lay her on her back, looking up at the sky, but he could not turn her now. He must remove his coat from around her head, he thought, but he could not bring himself to do it. The time for that had been when she was still lying under the trees, and he had not dared.

He began to fill in the grave. Until she was covered, he put in only soil, layers of soil which still teemed with disturbed life. Once he could not see her, he began to replace the stones he had dug up. He could not stop himself from brushing away the woodlice before he laid the stones in the grave. He fitted the stones together, the smaller and the larger, as if he were building a wall. She was covered again. Nothing could touch her. She would never push the stones back like her sheets and blankets in the morning, when she sat up and reached over her shoulder to untie her hair from its night plait. Once her hair was loose she shook it out until the cloud of it hid her face.

Turn over for Section B

Turn over ►

Over **Section B** and **Section C**, you must write about **three** texts from the following list:

Selected Poems: Crabbe, Browning and Wilde (pre-1900 poetry)

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner (pre-1900 poetry)

Atonement (post-2000 prose)

When Will There Be Good News? (post-2000 prose)

Oliver Twist

The Murder of Roger Ackroyd

Brighton Rock

Hamlet

Section B

Answer **one** question in this section.

Either

0	2
---	---

***Selected Poems* – George Crabbe, Robert Browning and Oscar Wilde**

‘In this selection of poetry the victims are always innocent.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of the poets’ authorial methods.

You should refer to at least **two authors** in your answer.

[25 marks]

or

0	3
---	---

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

‘The poem shows that repentance is pointless.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Coleridge’s authorial methods.

[25 marks]

or

0	4
---	---

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

‘Once you are a victim, you are always a victim.’

To what extent do you agree with this view of victims in the novel?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Atkinson’s authorial methods.

[25 marks]

or

0	5
---	---

***Atonement* – Ian McEwan**

‘Paul Marshall is a criminal with nothing to redeem him.’

To what extent do you agree with this view of Paul Marshall’s role in the novel?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of McEwan’s authorial methods.

[25 marks]

or

0	6
---	---

***Oliver Twist* – Charles Dickens**

‘In *Oliver Twist* punishment is always just.’

To what extent do you agree with this view of the ways in which Dickens presents punishment in the novel?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Dickens’ authorial methods.

[25 marks]

or

0	7
---	---

***Brighton Rock* – Graham Greene**

‘At the end of the novel the evil are punished and the good triumph.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Greene’s authorial methods.

[25 marks]

Turn over ►

or

0	8
---	---

The Murder of Roger Ackroyd – Agatha Christie

‘It is difficult for readers to admire Poirot despite his ability to solve the case.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Christie’s authorial methods.

[25 marks]

or

0	9
---	---

Hamlet – William Shakespeare

‘Ophelia is a complete innocent who does not deserve to suffer as she does.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Shakespeare’s dramatic methods.

[25 marks]

Section C

Answer **one** question in this section.

In your answer you must write about **two** texts that you have **not** used in **Section B**.

Either

1	0
---	---

'In crime writing, the criminals are not fundamentally bad people.'

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of authorial methods.

[25 marks]

or

1	1
---	---

Explore the significance of motivation in **two** crime texts you have studied.

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of authorial methods.

[25 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS

There are no questions printed on this page

Copyright information

For confidentiality purposes, all acknowledgements of third-party copyright material are published in a separate booklet. This booklet is published after each live examination series and is available for free download from www.aqa.org.uk.

Permission to reproduce all copyright material has been applied for. In some cases, efforts to contact copyright-holders may have been unsuccessful and AQA will be happy to rectify any omissions of acknowledgements. If you have any queries please contact the Copyright Team.

Copyright © 2021 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

