GradeMax



Mark Scheme (Results)

June 2025

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level In English Literature (WET04) Paper 4: Shakespeare and Pre-1900 Poetry

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General Marking Guidance

- All candidates must receive the same treatment. Examiners must mark the last candidate in exactly the same way as they mark the first.
- Mark schemes should be applied positively. Candidates must be rewarded for what they have shown they can do rather than penalised for omissions.
- Examiners should mark according to the mark scheme - not according to their perception of where the grade boundaries may lie.
- All the marks on the mark scheme are designed to be awarded. Examiners should always award full marks if deserved, i.e. if the answer matches the mark scheme. Examiners should also be prepared to award zero marks if the candidate's response is not worthy of credit according to the mark scheme.
- Where some judgement is required, mark schemes will provide the principles by which marks will be awarded and exemplification/indicative content will not be exhaustive.
- When examiners are in doubt regarding the application of the mark scheme to a candidate's response, a senior examiner must be consulted before a mark is given.
- Crossed out work should be marked **unless** the candidate has replaced it with an alternative response.
- Plans in the lined response area of the question paper/answer booklet should not be marked unless no other response to the question has been provided. This applies whether the plan is crossed out or not.

Specific Marking Guidance

When deciding how to reward an answer, examiners should consult both the indicative content and the associated marking grid(s). When using a levels-based mark scheme, the 'best fit' approach should be used.

- Examiners should first decide which descriptor most closely matches the answer and place it in that level.
- The mark awarded within the level will be decided based on the quality of the answer and will be modified according to how securely all bullet points are displayed at that level.
- Indicative content is exactly that – they are factual points that candidates are likely to use to construct their answer.
- It is possible for an answer to be constructed without mentioning some or all of these points, as long as they provide alternative responses to the indicative content that fulfils the requirements of the question. It is the examiner's responsibility to apply their professional judgement to the candidate's response in determining if the answer fulfils the requirements of the question.

Placing a mark within a level

- Examiners should first decide which descriptor most closely matches the answer and place it in that level. The mark awarded within the level will be decided based on the quality of the answer and will be modified according to how securely all bullet points are displayed at that level.
- In cases of uneven performance, the points above will still apply. Candidates will be placed in the level that best describes their answer according to the descriptors in that level. Marks will be awarded towards the top or bottom of that level depending on how they have evidenced each of the descriptor bullet points.
- If the candidate's answer meets the requirements fully, markers should be prepared to award full marks within the level. The top mark in the level is used for work that is as good as can realistically be expected within that level.

Unit 4: Shakespeare and Pre-1900 Poetry

Section A: Shakespeare

Question Number	Indicative Content
1	***Measure for Measure*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: • interest created by Isabella's generic role in the play's narrative development, e.g. her journey from novitiate to wife of the Duke • use of relationships between Isabella and other characters to develop interest in her persona, e.g. her relationship with Claudio; her relationship with Angelo • interest in her position as a character who is presented as both virtuous and manipulative, e.g. her presentation at the start of the play; her part in the bed trick • contrasts in the language used to present Isabella, e.g. 'You are too cold'; 'I desire to hear her speak again, / And feast upon her eyes' and the significance of the contemporary contextual relationship between women, virtue and temptation • the role of contemporary religion in possibly informing the presentation of Isabella's character, e.g. the 'Isabella Rule' which governed the London Convent of the order of Saint Clare • different interpretations and critical responses, e.g. the argument that in Isabella, we find an incredibly complex character in a play where women are often silenced and objectified. References to specific schools of thought and critics should be rewarded according to their relevance to candidates' arguments. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question Number	Indicative Content
2	***Measure for Measure*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: • how the theme of choice is presented through the characters, e.g. the choices made by the Duke; the choices made by Angelo • use of minor characters in the play to develop the theme of choice, e.g. the choices faced by the less powerful figures such as Pompey and Mistress Overdone • diction and imagery used to present the theme of choice, e.g. 'Spare him, spare him!'; 'I am that way going to temptation, / Where prayers cross.' • contextual factors which inform the play's presentation of choice, e.g. the (contested) suggestion that the play was written to present a vehicle for Shakespeare to instruct the new king in just rulership • performances of the play which alter its framing and re-focus the theme of choice, e.g. Doran (2019), which 'gender-switched Escalus' and 'found contemporary resonance in this 'problem play' through its links with the #MeToo movement.' (RSC website) • critical responses, e.g. 'The stakes for each character could not be higher' (Green), suggesting that choice is of paramount concern. References to specific schools of thought and critics should be rewarded according to their relevance to candidates' arguments. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question Number	Indicative Content
3	***The Taming of the Shrew*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: • use of various plot events to develop his character, e.g. Petruchio's motivation for marriage and his behaviour towards Katherine • imagery used to characterise Petruchio, e.g. 'Thus have I politicly begun my reign, / And 'tis my hope to end successfully.' • contrasts with other characters which are used to develop the character of Petruchio positively or otherwise • presentations of Petruchio which seek to explore aspects of his character through different filters, e.g. the all-female cast version revived in New York in 2016 • Petruchio as a representation of 'the social order and … patriarchy – the authority of fathers over their families, husbands over wives, and men in general over women' (Novy) and how the contemporary audience may have been more forgiving of his behaviour • critical responses, e.g. 'Petruchio behaves appallingly, and really abuses Kate by torturing her in order to force her into submission.' (Lloyd). References to specific schools of thought and critics should be rewarded according to their relevance to candidates' arguments. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question Number	Indicative Content
4	***The Taming of the Shrew*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: • use of the contrasting setting of the Induction, located in England, possibly in rural Warwickshire • the setting of 1590s Padua and its significance as a prosperous European city to which people might travel to make their fortunes • the setting of Petruchio's 'country house' and how this is used to provide contrast and develop character • themes developed through the use of settings, e.g. social hierarchy and power • productions which may have used the metatheatrical settings to create an alternative approach, e.g. Trevor Nunn's 1975 version with its 'earthy set and colourful props. Some of the audience sat on stage and on cue threw rotten fruit and vegetables at Katherina.' • the significance of the time setting in allowing for the exploration of contemporary contexts, e.g. 'the gulf between Renaissance ideals of a submissive femininity and the realities of women's behavior.' (Folger website). References to specific schools of thought and critics should be rewarded according to their relevance to candidates' arguments. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question Number	Indicative Content
5	***Hamlet*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: • potential causes of Hamlet's mental state, e.g. the murder of Old Hamlet; the appearance of the ghost • the role of dramatic elements of the play in presenting Hamlet's mental state, e.g. the soliloquies • use of imagery and diction to present Hamlet's mental state, e.g. 'I am but mad north-north-west'; 'I will be brief: your noble son is mad: / Mad call I it;' • the potential significance of sources such as *Treatise on Melancholy* (Bright) made the characteristics of Hamlet's mental state familiar to the Elizabethan audience and how modern audiences may respond differently • contrasting attitudes to mental health among audiences, e.g. the Elizabethan belief that depression was caused by an imbalance of the four humours; modern understanding of mental health issues and how these may result in different responses • critical responses to Hamlet's mental state, e.g. 'this melancholy is something very different from insanity, in anything like the usual meaning of that word.' (Bradley). References to specific schools of thought and critics should be rewarded according to their relevance to candidates' arguments. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question Number	Indicative Content
6	***Hamlet*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: • use of contrasts between characters, e.g. Hamlet and Fortinbras; Gertrude and Ophelia • ways in which contrasts in language, particularly in the soliloquies, affect the drama, e.g. 'O, that this too too solid flesh would melt / Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!' • the dramatic significance of contrasting themes, e.g. between action and inaction; innocence and guilt • the relevance of contrasting contextual factors in influencing the narrative, e.g. religious turmoil; peace and conflict (arising from questions about the Elizabethan succession) • productions of the play which are staged to bring out different contrasts, e.g. Godwin's (2016) which presented 'bold strokes of colour in a vibrant and breath-taking shape' (RSC website) • alternative interpretations which respond negatively to the play and by implication, its use of contrasts, e.g. '(Phaedra) keeps her Modesty even after She has lost her Wits. Had *Shakespear* secur'd this point for his young Virgin *Ophelia*, the *Play* had been better contriv'd.' (Collier). References to specific schools of thought and critics should be rewarded according to their relevance to candidates' arguments. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question Number	Indicative Content
7	***King Lear*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: • diction used to present Goneril and Regan, e.g. 'Sir, I love you more than word can wield the matter, / Dearer than eyesight' • imagery used to present Goneril and Regan, e.g. 'Detested kite'; 'if I were your father's dog, / You should not use me so' • contrast used to present the characters, e.g. Goneril and Regan as foils for Cordelia • significance of sources in the presentation of Goneril and Regan, e.g. 'Shakespeare drew on Higgins for Goneril's marriage to the Duke of Albany…as well as such details as the successive reductions in Lear's retinue by Goneril and Regan.' (British Library website) • contextual factors germane to the presentation of Goneril and Regan, e.g. complications surrounding James I's succession • alternative interpretations, e.g. 'the misogyny of *King Lear*, both the play and its hero, is constructed out of an ascetic tradition which presents women as the source of the primal sin of lust, combining with concerns about the threat to the family posed by female insubordination.' (McCluskie). References to specific schools of thought and critics should be rewarded according to their relevance to candidates' arguments. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question Number	Indicative Content
8	***King Lear*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: • interplay between different types of power presented in the play, e.g. political power; physical power; emotional power; natural power • diction and imagery used to present power, e.g. 'invest you jointly with my power, / Preeminence, and all the large effects / That troop with majesty.' • use of irony to present power, e.g. Lear's complete loss of even residual authority due to his trust that his daughters will wield it fairly • dramatic significance of events centred on versions of power, e.g. Lear's experience with natural power on the heath and contemporary beliefs about the role of nature as a divine agent • contextual factors that might bear on the presentation of power, e.g. internal struggles at court and the power dynamics of Renaissance Britain • critical responses, e.g. 'While Lear may have been a ruler of almost mythical status from ancient Britain, *King Lear* articulates pressing contemporary concerns about the power of early modern kings.' (Bengtsson). References to specific schools of thought and critics should be rewarded according to their relevance to candidates' arguments. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question Number	Indicative Content
9	**Prescribed text: *Metaphysical Poetry,* editor Colin Burrow** An appropriate choice of poem to accompany *Woman's Constancy* might be *Elegy: To his Mistress Going to Bed* by John Donne. Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: • diction used to present relationships, e.g. 'lovers' contracts'; 'true marriages' • imagery typical of metaphysical poetry used to present relationships, e.g. 'sleep, death's image' • Donne's use of questions to create a distinct personal address, focusing on a relationship: 'Tomorrow when thou leav'st, what wilt thou say?' • the irony at the end of the poem, reflecting the uncertainty of this relationship, e.g. 'by tomorrow I may think so too.' • contextual factors relating to relationships in the period, e.g. the explicit agreement of both partners was necessary to the arrangement of a valid marriage; nearly a third of Elizabethan brides were pregnant before they wed • alternative interpretations regarding Donne's approach to relationships in poems such as *Woman's Constancy*, e.g. 'neither sensual passion, nor gay and cynical wit, nor scorn and anger, is the dominant note' (Grierson). References to specific schools of thought and critics should be rewarded according to their relevance to candidates' arguments. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question Number	Indicative Content
10	**Prescribed text: *Metaphysical Poetry,* editor Colin Burrow** An appropriate choice of poem to accompany *Orinda to Lucasia* might be *To a Lady that Desired I Would Love Her* by Thomas Carew. Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: • imagery and symbolism used to present longing, e.g. 'the weary birds'; 'The drooping flowers' • aspects of the pastoral tradition used to create emphasis on longing, e.g. contrast between the rural setting of the first verse and the intimate personal appeal of the second verse • use of the varied iambic metre, e.g. to create the echo of a heartbeat or breathing • use of technical features such as sibilance to create a mood of longing, e.g. 'The sadness weighty, and the darkness strong' • context-specific readings, e.g. focusing on Philips' friendship with Anne Owen and her desire to raise it to the level of close male relationships celebrated in Classical literature • alternative interpretations, e.g. that Philips 'provides the most trenchant rejection of Cavalier sexual values. Using Cavalier motifs against the Cavaliers, (she)...proclaim(s) the validity of a woman's life independent of men's desires.' (Scodel). References to specific schools of thought and critics should be rewarded according to their relevance to candidates' arguments. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question Number	Indicative Content
11	**Prescribed text: *English Romantic Verse,* editor David Wright** An appropriate choice of poem to accompany *Songs of Innocence: Holy Thursday* might be *Songs of Experience: The Sick Rose* by William Blake. Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: • use of diction presenting social concerns, e.g. 'Then cherish pity' • use of imagery and symbolism presenting social concerns, e.g. 'these flowers of London town!' • Blake's presentation of social concerns using religious references, e.g. "Twas on a Holy Thursday'; 'multitudes of lambs' • use of other poetic techniques to present concerns around social control and institutionalism, e.g. regimented rhyme, versification and rhythm • analyses of the poem as a response to the poet's attitude towards contemporary social concerns, e.g. the role of the church and organised religion in directing the lives of children, specifically orphans • critical responses focusing on Blake's approach to social concerns, e.g. 'Blake thought of himself as a prophetic bard with a harp that could prostrate tyranny…or, more simply, as an honest man uttering his opinion of public matters.' (Erdman). References to specific schools of thought and critics should be rewarded according to their relevance to candidates' arguments. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question Number	Indicative Content
12	**Prescribed text: *English Romantic Verse,* editor David Wright** An appropriate choice of poem to accompany *Ode on Melancholy* might be *Songs of Experience: The Tyger* by William Blake. Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: • imagery and symbolism used to create a sense of place, e.g. 'from heaven like a weeping cloud, / That fosters the droop-headed flowers' • imagery and symbolism used to present mood and tone, e.g. 'Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose' • imagery and symbolism used to develop theme, e.g. 'She dwells with Beauty — Beauty that must die' • adaptation of classical imagery, typical of the Romantic approach to poetry, to add depth, e.g. 'Ay, in the very temple of delight' • the idea that Keats' own struggles with mental health issues have led to him writing a kind of poetic proto-self-help manual, focusing on restorative images of beauty, e.g. 'the rainbow of the salt sand-wave, / Or…the wealth of globed peonies' • alternative interpretations of the poem bearing on the imagery and symbolism, e.g. melancholy 'is inseparable from pleasure, as human life is essentially changeable and all things are transient.' (Hebron). References to specific schools of thought and critics should be rewarded according to their relevance to candidates' arguments. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question Number	Indicative Content
13	**Prescribed text*: The New Oxford Book of Victorian Verse* edited by Christopher Ricks** An appropriate choice to accompany *'From Sonnets from the Portuguese XXIV 'Let the world's sharpness, like a clasping knife'* might be *Drummer Hodge* by Thomas Hardy. Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: • imagery and symbolism creating mood and tone, e.g. 'this close hand of Love, now soft and warm' • diction creating mood and tone, e.g. 'strife'; 'I lean upon thee' • form and structure scaffolding mood and tone, e.g, Miltonic sonnet; the allusion to a Romance language in the title • how thematic content shapes mood and tone – this is a love poem addressed to Barrett's husband • the view that the tone of the sonnets changes from doubt and fear to a more accepting and passionate tone as her confidence in her relationship with her husband grew • critical interpretations, e.g. 'Her poems offered a vital energy, a new and compelling music, a bold engagement with controversial social issues, a combination of tough wit with passionate intensity.' (Mermin). References to specific schools of thought and critics should be rewarded according to their relevance to candidates' arguments. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question Number	Indicative Content
14	**Prescribed text*: The New Oxford Book of Victorian Verse* edited by Christopher Ricks** An appropriate choice to accompany *The Darkling Thrush* might be *Home-Thoughts, from Abroad* by Robert Browning. Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: • use of diction to present nature, e.g. 'Frost was spectre-grey' • use of images to present nature, e.g. 'The ancient pulse of germ and birth' • use of devices focusing on natural aging processes, e.g. alliteration in 'blast-beruffled plume' • the structure of the poem used to echo patterns of natural life such as the repetitions inherent in birdsong, e.g. alternate lines of tetrameter and trimeter; the abab rhyme scheme • contextual details, e.g. the poem was written and published on the cusp of two centuries in 1900, using nature to reflect on the 'Century's Deathbed' • alternative readings, e.g. focusing on the obscurity of 'Darkling' as a phrase which is hard to pin to a natural phenomenon: 'While all four of Hardy's predecessors employ 'darkling' with the sense of 'in the dark'... Hardy deploys it outside the context of surrounding words, lines or images.' (Allingham). References to specific schools of thought and critics should be rewarded according to their relevance to candidates' arguments. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Please refer to the specific marking guidance when applying this marking grid.					
Level	Mark	AO1 = bullet point 1	AO2 = bullet point 2	AO3 = bullet points 3,4	AO5 = bullet points 5,6
	0	No rewardable material.			
1	1–5	**Descriptive** • Makes little reference to texts with limited organisation of ideas. Limited use of appropriate concepts and terminology with frequent errors and lapses of expression. • Uses a narrative or descriptive approach that shows limited knowledge of texts and how meanings are shaped in texts. Shows a lack of understanding of the writer's craft. • Shows limited awareness of contextual factors. • Shows limited awareness of links between texts and contexts. • Shows limited awareness of different interpretations and alternative readings of texts. • Limited linking of different interpretations to own response.			
2	6–10	**General understanding/exploration** • Makes general points, identifying some literary techniques with general explanation of effects. Aware of some appropriate concepts and terminology. Organises and expresses ideas with clarity, although still has errors and lapses. • Gives surface readings of texts relating to how meanings are shaped in texts. Shows general understanding by commenting on straightforward elements of the writer's craft. • Has general awareness of the significance and influence of contextual factors. • Makes general links between texts and contexts. • Offers straightforward explanations of different interpretations and alternative readings of texts. • Some support of own ideas given with reference to generic different interpretations.			
3	11–15	**Clear relevant application/exploration** • Offers a clear response using relevant textual examples. Relevant use of terminology and concepts. Creates a logical, clear structure with few errors and lapses in expression. • Demonstrates knowledge of how meanings are shaped in texts with consistent analysis. Shows clear understanding of the writer's craft. • Demonstrates a clear exploration of the significance and influence of contextual factors. • Develops relevant links between texts and contexts. • Offers clear understanding of different interpretations and alternative readings of texts. • Explores different interpretations in support or contrast to own argument.			

4	16–20	**Discriminating controlled application/exploration** • Constructs a controlled argument with fluently embedded examples. Discriminating use of concepts and terminology. Controls structures with precise cohesive transitions and carefully chosen language. • Demonstrates discriminating understanding of how meanings are shaped in texts. Analyses, in a controlled way, the nuances and subtleties of the writer's craft. • Provides a discriminating analysis of the significance and influence of contextual factors. • Makes detailed links between texts and contexts. • Produces a developed exploration of different interpretations and alternative readings of texts. • Discussion is controlled and offers integrated exploration of different interpretations in development of own critical position.
5	21–25	**Critical and evaluative** • Presents a critical evaluative argument with sustained textual examples. Evaluates the effects of literary features with sophisticated use of concepts and terminology. Uses sophisticated structure and expression. • Exhibits a critical evaluation of the ways meanings are shaped in texts. Displays a sophisticated understanding of the writer's craft. • Presents a sophisticated evaluation and appreciation of the significance and influence of contextual factors. • Makes sophisticated links between texts and contexts. • Applies a sustained evaluation of different interpretations and alternative readings of texts. • Evaluation is supported by sophisticated use of application of alternative interpretations to illuminate own critical position.

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