A-level English Language and Literature

AQA 7707

Teacher guidance

Paris · The Handmaid’s Tale · Duffy · The Great Gatsby · A Streetcar Named Desire

Use your set texts and anthology. Answer the questions selected by your teacher. Marks are shown for each task.

Paris anthology

How speakers establish their knowledge of Paris

Paper 1: Telling stories · Section A: Remembered places

Comparison: 40 marks · AO1 15, AO3 15, AO4 10

Track how speakers make their experience sound relevant or trustworthy: consider pronoun choices, accounts of personal experience, evaluation and degrees of certainty.

Compare the shaping of a personal narrative with the co-construction of a conversation. Analyse what the interaction allows speakers to confirm, qualify or develop.

Relate language choices to the situation, participants and spoken mode. Do not treat every pause or non-fluency as evidence of uncertainty.

Expectations and discoveries during a city visit

Paper 1: Telling stories · Section A: Remembered places

Comparison: 40 marks · AO1 15, AO3 15, AO4 10

Compare how the writers select and order details rather than producing a list of different attractions.

Explore evaluation, perspective, rhetorical patterning and the balance between observation and advice. Interpret irony only where the wording supports it.

Connect the crafted travel-writing voices to implied audiences and purposes. A convincing comparison can recognise differences within each writer’s stance.

Paris as an opportunity for personal change

Paper 1: Telling stories · Section A: Remembered places

Comparison: 40 marks · AO1 15, AO3 15, AO4 10

Explore how each narrator positions a past or present version of herself through pronouns, temporal choices, selection of events and evaluation.

Compare how particular encounters or places become personally significant. Avoid assuming that both narrators experience an uncomplicated transformation.

Examine how genre and retrospective perspective influence the account offered to readers, making connections throughout rather than writing two separate mini-essays.

The Handmaid’s Tale

Spaces that hold different histories

Paper 1: Telling stories · Section B: Imagined worlds

Extract and whole-text analysis: 35 marks · AO1 10, AO2 10, AO3 15

Examine the layering of remembered activities over present restrictions through temporal movement, sensory detail, spatial reference and narrative perspective.

Make purposeful links with other repurposed or renamed locations. Explain how ordinary settings become part of Gilead’s control rather than assuming every object is a fixed symbol.

Connect Atwood’s dystopian reworking of familiar spaces to the reader’s recognition of continuities and changes. Context should illuminate specific language choices.

Private communication under restrictions

Paper 1: Telling stories · Section B: Imagined worlds

Extract and whole-text analysis: 35 marks · AO1 10, AO2 10, AO3 15

Analyse how the narrative constructs an absent writer and an imagined connection with her, including uncertainty, address and the significance assigned to a small material trace.

Connect private messages with other permitted or forbidden uses of language, attending to differences between them rather than treating all communication as the same kind of resistance.

Explore how a retrospective, restricted viewpoint can make an uncertain meaning personally powerful. Tie comments on literacy and institutional power to the text.

Loss of economic independence

Paper 1: Telling stories · Section B: Imagined worlds

Extract and whole-text analysis: 35 marks · AO1 10, AO2 10, AO3 15

Explore the relationship between institutional changes and personal responses through agency, reported speech, modality, pronouns and the sequence in which information is revealed.

Consider how different responses from Moira, Luke and Offred shape the episode. Keep a distinction between what a character claims and what the retrospective narrator leads readers to question.

Make connections with later dependencies without reducing the essay to a survey of restrictions. Contextual discussion should explain the particular representation of power.

Carol Ann Duffy - Mean Time

Claims to closeness

Paper 1: Telling stories · Section C: Poetic voices

Poetry analysis: 25 marks · AO1 15, AO2 10

The second poem is the student’s choice. The suggestions below illustrate possible approaches; they do not prescribe a pairing.

Compare how address, possession, assumptions about an addressee and the handling of time shape the two voices.

Consider whether closeness is presented as secure, demanding, imagined or unstable. Different interpretations are valid when grounded in precise wording.

Discuss the effects of verse organisation and figurative language within the voices rather than treating the poems as statements of the poet’s own life.

The desire for social approval

Paper 1: Telling stories · Section C: Poetic voices

Poetry analysis: 25 marks · AO1 15, AO2 10

The second poem is the student’s choice. The suggestions below illustrate possible approaches; they do not prescribe a pairing.

Analyse how voices reproduce, recall or question the language of achievement and respectability.

Explore the relation between an individual voice and the voices of a group through pronouns, reported language, listing, rhythm and shifts of evaluation.

Make carefully supported connections between the poems while recognising their different speakers and situations. Do not substitute general social commentary for close analysis.

The limits of returning to a familiar place

Paper 1: Telling stories · Section C: Poetic voices

Poetry analysis: 25 marks · AO1 15, AO2 10

The second poem is the student’s choice. The suggestions below illustrate possible approaches; they do not prescribe a pairing.

Track how place and time are constructed through viewpoint, tense, spatial reference, commands or other relevant grammatical choices.

Consider tensions between an imagined home and an experienced return. Explain how the voice guides or complicates the reader’s judgement.

Use relevant selections from both poems. Comparison supports this poetry task, but the assessed objectives are AO1 and AO2, not AO4.

The Great Gatsby

Owl Eyes’s account of the library

Paper 2: Exploring conflict · Section A: Writing about society and critical commentary

Re-creative writing: 25 marks · AO5 25

Critical commentary: 30 marks · AO2 15, AO4 10, AO5 5

Create a plausible spoken account with a consistent relationship to the listener. The perspective may be observant, impressed, sceptical or mixed; originality does not require caricature.

Select rather than mechanically retell the episode. Consider how the change of viewpoint alters the relative importance of books, wealth, authenticity and the narrator’s own status.

In the commentary, compare specific choices in the base passage with choices in the recast: voice, perspective, organisation and the presentation of speech or thought. Explain intended effects, not just a list of devices.

Catherine’s account of the apartment party

Paper 2: Exploring conflict · Section A: Writing about society and critical commentary

Re-creative writing: 25 marks · AO5 25

Critical commentary: 30 marks · AO2 15, AO4 10, AO5 5

Shape a distinctive but credible relationship with a trusted listener. Choices of disclosure, evasion, evaluation and reported speech can reveal her position without an explanatory narrator.

Use Catherine’s access to events carefully. Do not give her reliable knowledge of private thoughts or future events that the base passage cannot supply.

In the commentary, examine how selections and transformations change the representation of status and family loyalty. Compare the language of the recast with the base text and evaluate the effects.

Wolfsheim’s response to Nick’s request

Paper 2: Exploring conflict · Section A: Writing about society and critical commentary

Re-creative writing: 25 marks · AO5 25

Critical commentary: 30 marks · AO2 15, AO4 10, AO5 5

Construct a sustained voice that negotiates the difference between claimed loyalty and chosen action. Avoid turning the recast into an omniscient explanation of the novel’s mysteries.

The relationship to the associate should influence what is stated, implied or withheld. Keep invention proportionate to the information and attitudes available in the base passage.

In the commentary, analyse how the shift from Nick’s mediation to Wolfsheim’s own account changes readers’ access to motives. Compare precise language choices in both texts.

A Streetcar Named Desire

Acts of welcome and the control of domestic space

Paper 2: Exploring conflict · Section B: Dramatic encounters

Drama analysis: 45 marks · AO1 15, AO2 20, AO3 10

Explore terms of address, questions, offers, directives, interruptions and the distribution of practical knowledge. Avoid assuming that every apparently courteous act is either wholly sincere or wholly hostile.

Connect the arrival with later changes in who may enter, remain or exercise authority in the apartment. Explain the changing dramatic relationships rather than listing repeated objects.

Use relevant social and theatrical context to illuminate the exchange. Analyse what an audience can infer from performance choices as well as from spoken words.

Celebration as a setting for power

Paper 2: Exploring conflict · Section B: Dramatic encounters

Drama analysis: 45 marks · AO1 15, AO2 20, AO3 10

Examine the interactional pattern at the table: participation, silence, humour, directives, responses and the handling of objects.

Analyse how expectations associated with a celebration shape the significance of absence, a gift and an apparent social ritual. Ground interpretation in dialogue and stage directions.

Relate the episode to wider conflicts over gender, status and control of the home, while distinguishing what characters attempt from the effects achieved on stage.

Collective behaviour and responsibility

Paper 2: Exploring conflict · Section B: Dramatic encounters

Drama analysis: 45 marks · AO1 15, AO2 20, AO3 10

Explore how speech, silence, direct address and off-stage or non-verbal effects distribute attention and responsibility. Responses can differ within the group.

Consider contrasts between public explanations, private knowledge and visible action. Avoid diagnosing a character instead of analysing the dramatic representation.

Connect the ending with earlier choices that prepare for or complicate it. Contextual readings should remain open to the play’s tensions rather than treating the ending as an uncomplicated moral judgement.

Assessment references

AQA 7707 specification and specimen mark schemes. Use the official best-fit criteria when marking. The points here support discussion and are not exhaustive.