

General Certificate of Education  
January 2003  
Advanced Level Examination



**ENGLISH LITERATURE (SPECIFICATION A)  
Unit 4**

**LTA4**

Monday 20 January 2003 1.30 pm to 3.30 pm

**In addition to this paper you will require:**  
a 12-page answer book.

Time allowed: 2 hours

**Instructions**

- Use blue or black ink or ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is LTA4.
- There are **two** sections:  
**Section A:** Drama Pre-1770  
**Section B:** Poetry Pre-1900  
You must answer two questions, **one** chosen from **each** section.

**Information**

- The books prescribed for this paper **may not** be taken into the examination room.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 40.
- All questions carry 20 marks.
- You will be assessed on your ability to use an appropriate form and style of writing, to organise relevant information clearly and coherently, and to use specialist vocabulary, where appropriate. The degree of legibility of your handwriting and the level of accuracy of your spelling, punctuation and grammar will also be taken into account.

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**SECTION A – Drama Pre-1770**

Answer **one** question from this section.

In this section, you must ensure that you consider in your answer:

- different interpretations of texts by other readers
  - your own informed, independent opinions.
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**EITHER**

*Othello* – William Shakespeare

- 1 “Shakespeare has presented the three female characters merely as stereotypes: Desdemona the goddess, Emilia the wife and Bianca the whore.”

“Desdemona, Emilia and Bianca are complex characterisations.”

Discuss these two views in relation to the text.

What do **you** think about the ways Shakespeare presents these characters?

**OR**

- 2 “The ending of the play is no more than mere melodrama.”

“At the end of the play Shakespeare stirs in his audience a profound sense of grief for his tragic hero.”

How far can each of these opinions be supported from a study of the end of the play?

What do **you** think of the ending of the play?

**OR**

*Henry the Fourth Part 2* – William Shakespeare

- 3 “Pistol is a repulsive lout, an unwelcome addition to the so-called low-life characters who surround Falstaff.”

“Pistol brings freshness as well as comedy into an area of the play dominated by a Falstaff whose humour is stale and predictable.”

What case could you argue for each of these opinions?

How far does the character of Pistol appeal to **you**?

**OR**

- 4 “Shakespeare’s purpose in creating the Lord Chief Justice was probably to provide a Virtue to contrast with Falstaff’s Vice.”

“Shakespeare has created in the Lord Chief Justice a well-rounded character who dispenses fair justice to all.”

How far does the text support each of these views on the role of the Lord Chief Justice?

How do **you** see his role in the play?

**OR**

*The Merchant of Venice* – William Shakespeare

- 5 “The obtaining and retention of wealth by whatever means is the only activity that has any meaning for the characters who reside in Venice.”

“Racial hatred is the chief motivation of the wealthy in Venice.”

What evidence does the text provide to support both of these opinions?

What do **you** think makes the wealthy Venetians behave and speak as they do in the play?

**OR**

- 6 “Act 5 is an anticlimax to the play: the drama ended with Shylock’s humiliation, but Shakespeare drags out the play for twenty to twenty-five more minutes of gratuitous music and chit-chat.”

“Act 5 is a delightful conclusion in which the audience can see the fun and joys of Belmont overcoming the grim realities of Venice.”

How far does your study of Act 5 lead you to agree with both these opinions?

What is **your** opinion of the purpose, if any, of Act 5?

**OR**

*Noah and his Sons, The Second Shepherds’ Play and Herod the Great* from  
*The Complete Plays of the Wakefield Master*

- 7 An editor of *Noah and his Sons* has suggested the following staging for the play: “An upper level is required for God’s first appearance, and a small hill on which Noah’s WIFE can sit and spin. The Ark is probably carried into the acting area and quickly assembled (as by divine help and, possibly, to music); it can then be loaded with cattle and possessions by the three SONS and their WIVES. It may be wheeled off before the end of the play.”

Basing your answer on the text, what do you think might be the advantages of these suggestions? What modifications might you make to the staging if **you** were directing the play?

**OR**

- 8 Two critics have different opinions about the verse form in *The Second Shepherds’ Play*.

One claims that the verse form is so artificial that it distracts an audience from the enjoyment of an otherwise excellent play.

The other enthuses about the verse form: “it adds an extra dimension of enjoyment to the play.”

Judge each of these claims with reference to the play.

What is **your** opinion of the effectiveness of the verse form?

**OR**

*The Duchess of Malfi* – John Webster

- 9 “Surely Webster did not need two wicked brothers in his play? It would have been sufficient to present one – preferably the Duchess’ twin, Ferdinand.”

“The psychological differences between the Cardinal and Ferdinand enhance the drama of the play.”

What justification is there in the play for each of these views?

Why do **you** think that Webster included both of these brothers in his play?

**OR**

- 10 “In the death scene of the Duchess, Bosola is used by Webster to arouse the spirit of greatness in her. Through him she is able to assert the dignity of human life.”

“The death scene of the Duchess is one of ghastly horrors perpetrated by the sadistic Bosola.”

How far does your experience of the play support each of these opinions?

What is **your** response to the scene in which the Duchess dies?

**OR**

*Volpone* – Ben Jonson

- 11 “The sordid wickedness revealed in the play evokes in the audience a lasting disgust.”

“The situations in the play are so cleverly contrived, the dialogue so amusing that the mind is a-buzz with pleasure long after the performance has finished.”

How can the play provoke such differing responses?

What is **your** overall response to this play?

**OR**

- 12 “What motivates Jonson’s *Volpone* is greed.”

“The artist in *Volpone* is greater than the money-spinner. He takes active pleasure in his contrivances for their own sake, embroidering on them for his private satisfaction.”

How far would you agree with each of these views in relation to your study of the play?

How do **you** think Jonson intended his audience to see *Volpone*?

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**Section B – Poetry Pre-1900 The Romantic Period**

Answer **one** question from this section.

You are reminded that in this section of the paper you must demonstrate:

- your understanding of the contexts that have shaped the writing and study of your chosen poetry
  - how that poetry was received at the time it was written
  - your grasp of the poetry and how it is presented.
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**EITHER**

*Women Romantic Poets 1785–1832, An Anthology* – ed. Breen

- 13** How does the social class of the poets affect their concerns with and attitudes to the society to which they belong? How do they present these concerns and attitudes?

In your answer, **either** make detailed reference to two poets **or** range more widely through the *Anthology*.

**OR**

- 14** How do the women poets show their indignation at the injustices and evils in their world? You may, if you wish, concentrate on **two** of the poets **or** range more widely through the *Anthology*.

**OR**

*The Prelude, Books 1 and 2* – William Wordsworth (OUP, ed. de Selincourt and Gill)

- 15** *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* writes of the Romantic movement:

“It expressed an extreme assertion of self and the value of human experience.”

Consider these characteristics in Wordsworth’s *Prelude*, paying particular attention to the way Wordsworth expresses his thoughts and feelings in your choice of passages from **one** or **both** of the *Books*.

**OR**

- 16** From the evidence you find in **one** or **both** of the *Books*, show how Wordsworth presents the importance of his ideas of childhood.

**OR**

*Songs of Innocence and of Experience* – William Blake

- 17** How do Blake's *Songs* reflect the period of political and social change through which he lived? How effectively does he use language and form to convey his views about these changes?**OR**

**OR**

- 18** What influence did Blake's interest in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible have on his *Songs*?

**OR**

*Selected Poems* – John Keats (Penguin Poetry Library, ed. Barnard)

- 19** "Romanticism consists of the strange, the exotic and the grotesque."

Illustrate the truth of this statement by exploring the themes and techniques of Keats' poetry. You may select **two** or **three** key passages **or** range more widely throughout the selection.

**OR**

- 20** Discuss the importance of Keats' fascination with classical myths and explore the ways he presents them in his poetry.

**END OF QUESTIONS**