Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Tuesday 20 May 2025 – Morning

GCSE English Literature

J352/02 Exploring poetry and Shakespeare

Time allowed: 2 hours

You must have:
- the OCR 12-page Answer Booklet

Do not use:
- copies of the texts

INSTRUCTIONS
- Use black ink.
- Write your answer to each question in the Answer Booklet. The question numbers must be clearly shown.
- Fill in the boxes on the front of the Answer Booklet.
- All questions in Section A have two parts, (a) and (b). Answer **both** parts of the question on the poetry cluster you have studied.
- Answer **one** question on the text you have studied in Section B.

INFORMATION
- The total mark for this paper is **80**.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets **[ ]**.
- Quality of extended response will be assessed in questions marked with an asterisk (*).
- This document has **16** pages.

ADVICE
- Read each question carefully before you start your answer.

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Section A

Poetry across time

Answer **both** parts of the question on the **poetry cluster** you have studied.

1 Love and Relationships

Read the two poems below and then answer **both part (a) and part (b)**.

You should spend about 45 minutes on part (a) and 30 minutes on part (b).

(a) Compare how these poems present a relationship where one person feels more strongly than the other.

You should consider:

- ideas and attitudes in each poem
- tone and atmosphere in each poem
- the effects of the language and structure used. **[20]**

AND

(b) Explore in detail **one** other poem from your anthology which presents an unequal relationship. **[20]**

Warming Her Pearls by Carol Ann Duffy

Next to my own skin, her pearls. My mistress
bids me wear them, warm them, until evening
when I'll brush her hair. At six, I place them
round her cool, white throat. All day I think of her,

resting in the Yellow Room, contemplating silk *5*
or taffeta, which gown tonight? She fans herself
whilst I work willingly, my slow heat entering
each pearl. Slack on my neck, her rope.

She's beautiful. I dream about her
in my attic bed; picture her dancing *10*
with tall men, puzzled by my faint, persistent scent
beneath her French perfume, her milky stones.

I dust her shoulders with a rabbit's foot,
watch the soft blush seep through her skin
like an indolent sigh. In her looking-glass *15*
my red lips part as though I want to speak.

Full moon. Her carriage brings her home. I see
her every movement in my head…Undressing,
taking off her jewels, her slim hand reaching
for the case, slipping naked into bed, the way *20*

she always does… And I lie here awake,
knowing the pearls are cooling even now
in the room where my mistress sleeps. All night
I feel their absence and I burn.

Oh God by Michelle Tea

spilling water from my back,
you call and i come.
that exhausted walk to reach you
breathless and no i didn't run
to see you, i've been smoking
too much, same thing.

another awkward hug in the car
as my face smashes your cheek
that i can feel it leaving now
is the saddest, a beautiful eruption
you could have picked it off the tree
and chowed

but you weren't hungry.
feeling it dying away all day.
much worse than the straining
against the leash, another gorgeous
thing that should not have happened,
gone again.

2 Conflict

Read the two poems below and then answer **both part (a) and part (b)**.

You should spend about 45 minutes on part (a) and 30 minutes on part (b).

(a) Compare how these poems present a world changed by conflict.

You should consider:

- ideas and attitudes in each poem
- tone and atmosphere in each poem
- the effects of the language and structure used. **[20]**

AND

(b) Explore in detail **one** other poem from your anthology which presents how conflict changes things. **[20]**

Lament by Gillian Clarke

For the green turtle with her pulsing burden,
in search of the breeding ground.
For her eggs laid in their nest of sickness.

For the cormorant in his funeral silk,
the veil of iridescence on the sand, *5*
the shadow on the sea.

For the ocean's lap with its mortal stain.
For Ahmed at the closed border.
For the soldier with his uniform of fire.

For the gunsmith and the armourer, *10*
the boy fusilier who joined for the company,
the farmer's sons, in it for the music.

For the hook-beaked turtles,
the dugong and the dolphin,
the whale struck dumb by the missile's thunder. *15*

For the tern, the gull and the restless wader,
the long migrations and the slow dying,
the veiled sun and the stink of anger.

For the burnt earth and the sun put out,
the scalded ocean and the blazing well. *20*
For vengeance, and the ashes of language.

The Place Where We Are Right by Yehuda Amichai

From the place where we are right
Flowers will never grow
In the spring.

The place where we are right
Is hard and trampled *5*
Like a yard.

But doubts and loves
Dig up the world
Like a mole, a plow.
And a whisper will be heard in the place *10*
Where the ruined
House once stood.

3 Youth and Age

Read the two poems below and then answer **both part (a) and part (b)**.

You should spend about 45 minutes on part (a) and 30 minutes on part (b).

(a) Compare how these poems present thoughts about life and death.

You should consider:

- ideas and attitudes in each poem
- tone and atmosphere in each poem
- the effects of the language and structure used. **[20]**

AND

(b) Explore in detail **one** other poem from your anthology which presents sad thoughts. **[20]**

Equilibrium by Theresa Lola

My new-born brother wailed into existence
and my grandfather's eyes became two stopwatches

counting down his own exit. At the naming ceremony
my grandfather was quiet as a body cut open for autopsy.

He broke bread, sipped on fresh orange juice. *5*
The pause between each sip elongated and I knew

the mathematician in him
had remembered the equation of equilibrium.

As my new-born brother was crowned with a name
my grandfather's brain began to forget his. *10*

Margaret's Moon by Jackie Kay

After she died, I swear the sky
Had the most beautiful of all sunsets,
A blush of pink, then red, a glass of red,
Sudden dark and a hammock moon,
Then its faint silhouette, almost secret. *5*
Life half-written, half unsaid.
I had kissed your head in the strange room.
Then later, I blew a kiss to the stars, to regret.

Margaret,

I imagined you lifting your head, your arms, *10*
Loosening them, shedding skin and cells and bone
Till you became all spirit, released
Into the cairns[1], hills, the braes[2], barley,
The sea lochs[3] and the sea and at last,
At least it seemed to me, you were free. *15*

[1] cairns – human-made piles of stones
[2] braes – steep hillsides, particularly in Scotland
[3] lochs – lakes

Section B

Shakespeare

Romeo and Juliet

Choose **one** question.

You should spend about **45 minutes** on this section.

EITHER

4* Explore the ways in which Shakespeare presents dreams and visions of the future in *Romeo and Juliet*. Refer to this extract from Act 1 Scene 4 and elsewhere in the play. **[40]**

> In this extract, Mercutio finishes telling Romeo about Queen Mab, the fairy who inspires dreams. Romeo has had a dream which has suggested he should not go to the Capulets' party.

MERCUTIO Sometime she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,
And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,
Of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades,
Of healths five fathom deep; and then anon
Drums in his ear, at which he starts and wakes,
And, being thus frighted, swears a prayer or two,
And sleeps again. This is that very Mab
That plats the manes of horses in the night;
And bakes the elf-locks in foul sluttish hairs,
Which once untangled much misfortune bodes.
This is the hag, when maids lie on their backs,
That presses them and learns them first to bear,
Making them women of good carriage.
This is she–

ROMEO Peace, peace, Mercutio, peace!
Thou talk'st of nothing.

MERCUTIO True, I talk of dreams,
Which are the children of an idle brain,
Begot of nothing but vain fantasy;
Which is as thin of substance as the air,
And more inconstant than the wind, who woos
Even now the frozen bosom of the north,
And, being anger'd, puffs away from thence,
Turning his side to the dew-dropping south.

OR

5* To what extent does Shakespeare suggest the love of Romeo and Juliet is fantasy rather than realistic?
Explore at least two moments from the play to support your ideas. **[40]**

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The Merchant of Venice

Choose **one** question.

You should spend about 45 minutes on this section.

EITHER

6* Explore the ways in which Shakespeare presents love in this play. Refer to this extract from Act 2 Scene 9 and elsewhere in the play. **[40]**

> In this extract, Portia has just dismissed Arragon, who has failed the casket test. Bassanio arrives in Belmont.

PORTIA Thus hath the candle sing'd the moth.
O, these deliberate fools! When they do choose,
They have the wisdom by their wit to lose.
NERISSA The ancient saying is no heresy:
Hanging and wiving goes by destiny.
PORTIA Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

Enter a Servant

SERVANT Where is my lady?
PORTIA Here; what would my lord?
SERVANT Madam, there is alighted at your gate
A young Venetian, one that comes before
To signify th' approaching of his lord,
From whom he bringeth sensible regreets;
To wit, besides commends and courteous breath,
Gifts of rich value. Yet I have not seen
So likely an ambassador of love.
A day in April never came so sweet
To show how costly summer was at hand
As this fore-spurrer comes before his lord.
PORTIA No more, I pray thee; I am half afeard
Thou wilt say anon he is some kin to thee,
Thou spend'st such high-day wit in praising him.
Come, come, Nerissa, for I long to see
Quick Cupid's post that comes so mannerly.
NERISSA Bassanio, Lord Love, if thy will it be!

OR

7* How does Bassanio's relationship with Antonio influence the way the play develops? Explore at least two moments from the play to support your ideas. **[40]**

Macbeth

Choose **one** question.

You should spend about 45 minutes on this section.

EITHER

8* How does Shakespeare present the dangers of knowing too much about the future? Refer to this extract from Act 5 Scene 5 and elsewhere in the play. **[40]**

In this extract, a Messenger comes to Dunsinane Castle to tell Macbeth that he has seen the wood move.

MESSENGER As I did stand my watch upon the hill,
I look'd toward Birnam, and anon me-thought,
The wood began to move.
MACBETH Liar and slave!
MESSENGER Let me endure your wrath, if't be not so.
Within this three mile may you see it coming;
I say, a moving grove.
MACBETH If thou speak'st false,
Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive,
Till famine cling thee. If thy speech be sooth,
I care not if thou dost for me as much.
I pull in resolution, and begin
To doubt th' equivocation of the fiend
That lies like truth. 'Fear not, till Birnam wood
Do come to Dunsinane.' And now a wood
Comes toward Dunsinane. Arm, arm, and out.
If this which he avouches does appear,
There is nor flying hence nor tarrying here.
I gin to be aweary of the sun,
And wish th' estate o' th' world were now undone.
Ring the alarum bell! Blow wind, come wrack;
At least we'll die with harness on our back.

OR

9* 'He has none of the qualities of a true king.'

To what extent do you agree that this is how Shakespeare portrays Macbeth? Explore at least two moments from the play to support your ideas. **[40]**

Much Ado About Nothing

Choose **one** question.

You should spend about 45 minutes on this section.

EITHER

10* Explore how Beatrice's 'merry war' with Benedick is presented in *Much Ado About Nothing*. Refer to this extract from Act 1 Scene 1 and elsewhere in the play. **[40]**

In this extract, a Messenger has just praised the bravery of Benedick in battle.

LEONATO You must not, sir, mistake my niece: there is a kind of merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and her; they never meet but there's a skirmish of wit between them.

BEATRICE Alas, he gets nothing by that. In our last conflict four of his five wits went halting off, and now is the whole man govern'd with one; so that if he have wit enough to keep himself warm, let him bear it for a difference between himself and his horse; for it is all the wealth that he hath left, to be known a reasonable creature.
Who is his companion now? He hath every month a new sworn brother.

MESSENGER Is't possible?

BEATRICE Very easily possible: he wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat; it ever changes with the next block.

MESSENGER I see, lady, the gentleman is not in your books.

BEATRICE No; an he were, I would burn my study. But, I pray you, who is his companion? Is there no young squarer now that will make a voyage with him to the devil?

MESSENGER He is most in the company of the right noble Claudio.

BEATRICE O Lord! He will hang upon him like a disease; he is sooner caught than the pestilence, and the taker runs presently mad. God help the noble Claudio! If he have caught the Benedick, it will cost him a thousand pound ere 'a be cured.

OR

11* 'People in love can behave foolishly.'

To what extent do you agree with this view of lovers in *Much Ado About Nothing*? Explore at least two moments from the play to support your ideas. **[40]**

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