



Rewarding Learning

ADVANCED
General Certificate of Education
2023

English Literature
Assessment Unit A2 1
assessing
Shakespearean Genres

[AEL11]

WEDNESDAY 31 MAY, MORNING

MARK
SCHEME

General Marking Instructions

Introduction

The main purpose of a mark scheme is to ensure that examinations are marked accurately, consistently and fairly. The mark scheme provides examiners with an indication of the nature and range of candidates' responses likely to be worthy of credit. It also sets out the criteria which they should apply in allocating marks to candidates' responses.

Assessment Objectives

Below are the assessment objectives for GCE English Literature.

Candidates should be able to:

- AO1:** Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.
- AO2:** Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.
- AO3:** Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.
- AO4:** Explore connections across and within literary texts.
- AO5:** Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

Quality of candidates' responses

In marking the examination papers, examiners should be looking for a quality of response reflecting the level of maturity which may reasonably be expected of a 17- or 18-year-old which is the age at which the majority of candidates sit their GCE examinations.

Flexibility in marking

Mark schemes are not intended to be totally prescriptive. No mark scheme can cover all the responses which candidates may produce. In the event of unanticipated answers, examiners are expected to use their professional judgement to assess the validity of answers. If an answer is particularly problematic, then examiners should seek the guidance of the Supervising Examiner.

Positive marking

Examiners are encouraged to be positive in their marking, giving appropriate credit for what candidates know, understand and can do rather than penalising candidates for errors or omissions. Examiners should make use of the whole of the available mark range for any particular question and be prepared to award full marks for a response which is as good as might reasonably be expected of a 17- or 18-year-old GCE candidate.

Awarding zero marks

Marks should only be awarded for valid responses and no marks should be awarded for an answer which is completely incorrect or inappropriate.

Bands of response

In deciding which level of response to award, examiners should look for the 'best fit'. In deciding which mark within a particular band to award to any response, examiners are expected to use their professional judgement.

The following guidance is provided to assist examiners.

- ***Threshold performance:*** Response which just merits inclusion in the band and should be awarded a mark at or near the bottom of the range.
- ***Intermediate performance:*** Response which clearly merits inclusion in the band and should be awarded a mark at or near the middle of the range.
- ***High performance:*** Response which fully satisfies the band description and should be awarded a mark at or near the top of the range.

Quality of written communication

Quality of written communication is taken into account in assessing candidates' responses to all tasks and questions and is assessed under AO1.

Advice to Examiners

1 Description v Analysis/Argument

Answers which consist of simple narration or description as opposed to the argument required by AO5 should not be rewarded beyond Band 1. From Band 3 upwards you will find scripts indicating increasing ability to engage with the precise terms of the question and to construct a relevant argument. Top Band answers will address key terms in an explicit and sustained way.

2 Key Terms/Issues

Candidates must take account of key terms and structure their answers accordingly if they are to be relevant and properly focused. Key terms and the relationships amongst them are of two distinct kinds: those which are in **directives** (examples will be provided from the current examination paper) and those which are included in the question's stimulus statement (examples will be provided from the current examination paper).

3 Assessment Objectives for A2 1

- (a) **AO1** This globalising objective emphasises three essential qualities:
- (i) knowledge and understanding of the text.
 - (ii) the coherent organisation of material in response to the question;
 - (iii) communication appropriate to literary studies (which is also reflected in the paper's general rubric: "Quality of written communication will be assessed");
- (b) **AO2** This objective requires candidates to **identify, illustrate** and **explore** such dramatic methods as form, structure, language (including imagery) and tone, and staging. Candidates who offer no consideration of methods cannot be rewarded beyond a mark of **30**. Candidates who offer only a limited consideration of methods cannot be rewarded beyond a mark of **40**.
- (c) **AO3** No specific sources are prescribed or recommended. Nevertheless, as the given readings of the text address an issue of Shakespearean genres, candidates will be expected to provide appropriate information from outside the text. Such information must be applied to the terms of the question. Little credit should be given for contextual information that is introduced merely for its own sake. Candidates who demonstrate significant strengths in AO1 and AO2 and AO5 but who provide no external contextual information cannot be rewarded beyond a mark of **30**. Candidates who demonstrate significant strengths in AO1 and AO2 and AO5 but who provide only limited external contextual information cannot be rewarded beyond a mark of **40**. "Limited" contextual information would include: simple assertions and generalisation; or contextual information that is not completely relevant (but could have been argued into relevance).
- (d) **AO4** This objective requires candidates to make relevant links between the extract and the wider text.
- (e) **AO5** This objective is the driver of A2 1 and requires candidates to respond to a stimulus statement which expresses a particular reading of the play by constructing a coherent and cogent argument. AO5 will be the main determinant of the final mark awarded in the assessment of this unit.

4 **Derived Material**

Although heavily derivative work is less likely to be found in “closed book” examinations, it may still appear in the form of work which shows signs of being substantially derived from editors’ “Introductions” and “Notes” and/or from teachers’ notes. Evidence of close dependence on such aids may include (a) the repetition of the same ideas or phrases from a particular centre or from candidates using the same edition of a text and (b) oblique or irrelevant responses to the questions. Such evidence cannot always be easily spotted, however, and candidates must be given the benefit of the doubt. Examiners should also distinguish between the uses to which such derived material is put. Where the candidate has integrated short pieces of derived material **relevantly** into her/his argument, marks should not be withheld. On the other hand, credit cannot be given for large sections of material regurgitated by the candidate even when they are relevant.

5 **Unsubstantiated Assertions**

In all answers, candidates are expected to provide convincing textual evidence in the form of close reference and/or apt quotation for their comments. Unsupported generalisation should not be rewarded. Reference to other critical opinions should include sufficient information to indicate that the candidate understands the point s/he is citing.

6 **Use of Quotation**

Obviously, use of quotation will be more secure in “open book” than in “closed book” examinations, although short, apt and mostly accurate quotation will be expected in A2 1. Quotations should be appropriately selected and woven into the main body of the discussion. Proper conventions governing the introduction, punctuation and layout of quotations should be observed, with particular regard to the candidates’ smooth and syntactically appropriate combining of the quotation with their own words.

7 **Observance of Rubric**

You should always ensure that candidates observe the rubric of each question and of the paper as a whole.

8 **Length of Answers**

Length does not always mean quality. Some lengthy answers are thorough and interesting, others repetitive and contain much irrelevant and/or unrelated material. On the other hand, some brief answers may be scrappy while others are cogent and incisive.

9 **Answers in Note Form**

Some answers may degenerate into notes or may, substantially, take the form of notes. Do not assume that notes are automatically worthless. Look at them carefully. Some notes are better than others.

The use of notes will generally mean that the candidate has failed to construct a properly developed and coherent argument, but they may contain creditable insights or raise pertinent points, however inadequately developed these insights or points may be. If in doubt, contact the Supervising Examiner.

10 **Uneven Performance**

While a response may begin badly, it may improve as it develops. Read all of each answer carefully and do not let obvious weaknesses blind you to strengths displayed elsewhere in the answer.

11 **Implicit/Explicit**

Examiners are strongly urged to mark what is **on the page** rather than what they think the candidate might mean. Do not attempt to do the work for the candidate to justify a higher mark than is actually earned. The argument that something is **implicit** in the answer is extremely unreliable as what may appear to be implicit to one examiner may not appear so to another.

Mark Grid A2 Unit 1 (The Study of Shakespearean Genres)

Mark	AO	General characteristics	How to arrive at the mark
Band 5 41–50 Assured, excellent, perceptive ‘ Assured ’: confident, controlled, judiciously selective, highly developed sense of audience and purpose ‘ Excellent ’: highly developed literary skills ‘ Perceptive ’: creative	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> excellent knowledge and understanding excellent sense of order excellent level of expression 	At the top of the band, responses will be cogent and sophisticated.
	AO2	assured and perceptive comments on methods linked convincingly to the key terms	At the bottom of the band, responses will be confidently organised and fluent, showing a detailed and thorough understanding of the text.
	AO3	assured and perceptive comments on external context	
	AO4	makes connections in an assured way	
	AO5	assured and sophisticated reasoning/interpretation in relation to the key terms	
Band 4 31–40 Coherent, secure and consistent ‘ Coherent and secure ’: a response to the key terms which demonstrates clarity and integration in the handling of literary material ‘ Consistent ’: maintains focus on all aspects of the task	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> secure knowledge and understanding secure sense of order coherent level of expression 	At the top of the band, responses will connect with the key terms in a consistently relevant way, showing articulation and a well-developed understanding of the text.
	AO2	coherent and secure comments on methods linked clearly to the key terms	At the bottom of the band, responses will connect with the key terms in a mostly relevant way, showing secure understanding of the text and clarity of expression.
	AO3	coherent and secure comments on external context	
	AO4	makes secure connections	
	AO5	coherent and consistent attempts at reasoning/interpretation with clear sense of relevance to the key terms	
Band 3b 26–30 Increasingly purposeful/Competent ‘ Increasingly purposeful/Competent ’: a fairly developed and controlled response to the key terms and other aspects of the task	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> competent knowledge and understanding competent sense of order competent level of expression 	At the top of the band, responses will make some purposeful and relevant attempts to connect with the key terms (these attempts may not be sustained or consistent).
	AO2	increasingly purposeful comments on methods with explanations linked competently to the key terms	At the bottom of the band, responses will make some purposeful and relevant attempts to connect with the key terms (these attempts may not be sustained or consistent).
	AO3	increasingly purposeful comments on external context	
	A04	makes competent connections	
	AO5	competent attempts at reasoning/interpretation with competent sense of relevance to the key terms	

Mark	AO	General characteristics	How to arrive at the mark
Band 3a 21–25 Limited ‘Limited’: a more deliberate engagement with the key terms and other aspects of the task	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing knowledge and understanding limited sense of order limited level of expression 	
	AO2	limited attempt to relate comments on methods to key terms	
	AO3	limited comments on external context	
	AO4	makes limited connections	At the bottom of the band, responses will engage more deliberately with the key terms but with limited development and understanding.
	AO5	limited attempts at reasoning/interpretation with limited sense of relevance to the key terms	
Band 2 11–20 Basic/A little awareness ‘Basic’: assertive, undeveloped, superficial, partially understood, generalised ‘A little awareness’: a vague/simplistic sense of the key terms	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> basic knowledge and understanding of the text basic sense of order basic level of expression 	At the top of the band, responses will make basic attempts to connect with the key terms; the response will be expressed with basic clarity and intermittent relevance.
	AO2	a little awareness of methods	
	AO3	a little awareness of external context	
	AO4	may make basic connections	At the bottom of the band, responses will make reference to the key terms with a little understanding. The writing will be occasionally relevant.
	AO5	basic attempt at reasoning with basic sense of relevance to the key terms	
Band 1 1–10 Mostly irrelevant/Mostly misunderstood/Mostly inaccurate ‘Mostly irrelevant’: general comments about the text but without conscious identification of the task ‘Mostly misunderstood’ and ‘Mostly inaccurate’: knowledge of the text is insecure/incorrect	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mostly irrelevant lack of knowledge incoherence writes with very little clarity or accuracy 	At the top of the band, responses will make some unconnected points in relation to the text; the response will lack clarity.
	AO2	very little understanding of methods	
	AO3	very little understanding of external context	At the bottom of the band, responses will have no connection with the text; the writing will be hard to follow and irrelevant.
	AO4	very little ability to make connections	
	AO5	very little ability to engage with the key terms	
Band 0 0		No attempt to respond	

1 *Othello*

Desdemona’s death is the result of Othello’s sexual jealousy.

By referring closely to extract 1, printed in the accompanying Resource Booklet and to other appropriately selected parts of the text, **show to what extent** you would agree with the view expressed above.

Your **argument** should include relevant comments on Shakespeare’s dramatic methods, and relevant external contextual information on the nature of Shakespearean Tragedy.

N.B. Equal marks are available for your treatment of the given extract and other relevant parts of the text.

The following mark scheme should be applied in conjunction with the A2 1 Shakespearean Genres Mark Band Grid and the following table:

[0]	NONE
[1]–[10]	LITTLE UNDERSTANDING
[11]–[20]	BASIC
[21]–[25]	LIMITED
[26]–[30]	INCREASINGLYPURPOSEFUL
[31]–[40]	COHERENT
[41]–[50]	ASSURED

The information below is intended to **exemplify** the type of content you may see in responses. Reference should be made to some of the following points, and all other valid comments will be rewarded.

Responses should demonstrate the following:

AO1: Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.

Answers should contain:

- knowledge and understanding of the play in appropriate reference and quotation
- order and relevance in conveying ideas
- appropriate and accurate expression
- appropriate use of literary terminology
- skilful and meaningful insertion of quotation.

AO5: Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

This **driving objective** will require the candidate to:

- take due account of the key terms of the question, examining the relationship between them, i.e. **“Desdemona’s death”, “result of”, “Othello’s sexual jealousy”**
- offer opinion or judgement in response to the given reading of the text
- make an attempt at reasoning in support of his/her opinion
- provide textual referencing to illustrate his/her opinion
- show awareness of other readings than that expressed in the stimulus statement, e.g. that **Desdemona’s death could have been precipitated by Othello’s heightened sense of honour, or by his gullibility in relation to Iago.**

In addition to the extract, some situations which may be found useful in considering this question are:

- Iago’s soliloquies (Act 2 scene 1, Act 2 scene 3) in which he reveals his plans to deceive Othello
- the interaction between Othello and Iago (Act 3 scene 3) when Othello’s gullibility becomes apparent for the first time; the series of subsequent interactions between Othello and Iago (Act 3 scene 3) in which he expresses both jealousy and a sense of offended pride
- the interactions between Othello and Iago (Act 4 Scene 1) in which Othello, having been fooled by Iago into believing that Cassio was speaking disrespectfully about Desdemona, vows to kill his wife
- the closing scene (Act 5 scene 2) in which Othello expresses the idea of himself as an “honourable murderer”

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

Candidates should **identify** and **explore** aspects of Shakespeare’s dramatic methods in relation to the key terms of the question.

Extract

- use of metaphor of Othello’s jealousy as a monstrous parasite – “O, beware, my lord, of jealousy;/It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock/The meat it feeds on” – to suggest that Desdemona’s death could be considered as the result of sexual jealousy
- use of metaphor of wealth versus poverty – “But riches fineless is as poor as winter/To him that ever fears he shall be poor” – to produce a sense of paranoia in Othello, which may be used to form an argument that it is Othello’s gullibility in listening to Iago (rather than sexual jealousy) that ultimately brings about the death of Desdemona
- use of metaphor of infidelity as rebellion – “Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw/The smallest fear or doubt of her revolt” – which may suggest that Desdemona’s death will come as a result of Othello’s pride
- use of a series of imperatives — “Look to your wife”, “observe her well”, “Wear your eye thus” — to demonstrate the forceful role that Iago’s manipulative schemes have in encouraging the sexual jealousy that will lead to Desdemona’s death
- use of simile — “She that, so young, could give out such a seeming,/To seel her father’s eyes up as close as oak — /He thought ’twas witchcraft” — with which Iago convinces Othello of Desdemona’s duplicity, suggesting that Othello’s gullibility plays a very significant role in causing Desdemona’s death
- use of a series of interjections – “O misery!”, “Dost thou say so?”, “And so she did” – to convey Othello’s gradual resignation in the face of Iago’s manipulative onslaught against Desdemona, which may point to Othello’s gullibility rather than sexual jealousy as the significant factor leading to the death of Desdemona

Wider Text

- use of a metaphor of Desdemona as a spoiled page in Act 4 scene 2 – “Was this fair paper, this most goodly book/Made to write ‘whore’ upon?” – which may provoke a range of interpretations (e.g. revulsion, wounded pride) about the motives which lead to Desdemona’s death
- repeated use of accusatory questions in Act 4 scene 2 – “Why, what art thou?”, “Are you not a strumpet?”, “What, not a whore?” – which suggest that sexual jealousy is the main factor in the events leading up to Desdemona’s death
- ironic use of symbolic setting (the marital bed) for Desdemona’s death to convey the idea that Othello’s sexual jealousy, sense of revulsion, wounded pride have driven him to the conviction that this is a fitting end to a marriage which has been desecrated by his wife’s infidelity
- use of the tragic denouement in which Emilia expresses her view that Desdemona’s death has been caused by Othello’s gullibility – “O thou dull Moor!”

- use of a series of metaphors in which manipulative lies are compared to poison – “Dangerous conceits are in their natures poisons”; “poison his (Brabantio’s) delight”; “pour this pestilence into his (Othello’s) ear” – to present the idea that Desdemona’s death could be seen as the result of Iago’s schemes
- use of dramatic irony (Othello repeatedly refers to Iago as “honest”) to suggest that Desdemona’s death comes as a result of Othello’s gullibility
- use of the stage property of the handkerchief to present the idea that Desdemona’s death comes about as a result of Iago’s manipulative schemes, which are aimed at producing Othello’s sexual jealousy
- use of oxymoron – “An honourable murderer, if you will; For nought I did in hate, but all in honour” — to present the idea that Othello himself sees his attempts to protect his honour as the cause of Desdemona’s death
- use of rhetorical question in the denouement – “Who can control his fate?” – to suggest that Desdemona’s death was predetermined and thus ‘caused’ by external forces beyond Othello’s control

AO3: Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.

The nature of Shakespearean Tragedy:

- inevitable doom is at the heart of Aristotelian Tragedy and informs Shakespearean Tragedy
- the tragic hero is in possession of a trait which is both something which makes him great and the flaw that leads to his downfall
- hubris is the typical tragic flaw
- hamartia is an error of judgement which seals the tragic fate of the hero
- the Shakespearean tragic hero is beset by both inner and outer forces which combine to effect his downfall
- the tragic fall (peripeteia is the turning point or reversal of fortune which initiates this)
- attainment of tragic knowledge (anagnorisis) to a greater or lesser extent
- purgation of pity and fear (catharsis) as the intended effect on the audience
- inclusion of a sentimental or pathetic element in Shakespearean tragedy which is rarely seen in Greek Tragedy, e.g. Lady Macduff in ‘Macbeth’, Ophelia in ‘Hamlet’, Cordelia in ‘King Lear’

AO4: Explore connections across and within literary texts.

The characters/themes should be explored both in the extract and throughout the play.

2 *King Lear*

Lear is entirely responsible for Cordelia's fate.

By referring closely to extract 2, printed in the accompanying Resource Booklet and to other appropriately selected parts of the text, **show to what extent** you would agree with the view expressed above.

Your **argument** should include relevant comments on Shakespeare's dramatic methods, and relevant external contextual information on the nature of Shakespearean Tragedy.

N.B. Equal marks are available for your treatment of the given extract and other relevant parts of the text.

The following mark scheme should be applied in conjunction with the A2 1 Shakespearean Genres Mark Band Grid and the following table:

[0]	NONE
[1]–[10]	LITTLE UNDERSTANDING
[11]–[20]	BASIC
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The information below is intended to **exemplify** the type of content you may see in responses. Reference should be made to some of the following points, and all other valid comments will be rewarded.

Responses should demonstrate the following:

AO1: Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.

Answers should contain:

- knowledge and understanding of the play in appropriate reference and quotation
- order and relevance in conveying ideas
- appropriate and accurate expression
- appropriate use of literary terminology
- skilful and meaningful insertion of quotation.

AO5: Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

This **driving objective** will require the candidate to:

- take due account of the key terms of the question, examining the relationship between them, i.e. "**Lear**", "**entirely**", "**responsible**", "**Cordelia's fate**"
- offer opinion or judgement in response to the given reading of the text
- make an attempt at reasoning in support of his/her opinion

- provide textual referencing to illustrate his/her opinion
- show awareness of other readings than that expressed in the stimulus statement, e.g. that **Cordelia could be said to bear some responsibility for her own fate by refusing to take part in Lear's 'love test', or that her fate is irrevocably linked with that of Lear the Tragic Hero.**

In addition to the extract, some situations which may be found useful in considering this question are:

- the 'love test' (before and after the given extract)
- Lear's enlightenment as to his own responsibility during the scenes on the heath
- Cordelia's return with the French army
- Lear's interactions with Cordelia in the final stages of the play

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

Candidates should **identify** and **explore** aspects of Shakespeare's dramatic methods in relation to the key terms of the question.

Extract

- use of metonymy ("to whose young love/The vines of France and milk of Burgundy/Strive to be interest'd") to emphasise the favoured and fortunate position of Cordelia, which may be argued to suggest that any adverse fate that befalls Cordelia can only be her own responsibility
- use of contrast between Lear's floridly figurative invitation to Cordelia to speak and her brief, repetitive and unforthcoming replies ("Nothing, my lord...Nothing") accentuates Cordelia's apparent obstinacy and may strengthen Lear's conclusion that she is responsible for what happens to her
- use of metaphor — "I cannot heave/My heart into my mouth..." — to illustrate by the strenuousness of the imagined action that Cordelia cannot compromise her integrity by speaking falsely: her inability may raise questions about how far or indeed whether she is responsible for her fate
- compressed use of lexical field which emphasises precision and the measuring out of obligation ("bond", "no more nor less", "Return those duties back as are right fit", "half my care and duty") continues the presentation of Cordelia's apparent obstinacy and Lear's growing apprehension that she, not he, is determining her fate
- use of public setting, i.e. the court, lends damaging weight to Cordelia's display of recalcitrance in her challenge to the king's authority and strengthens Lear's impression that she is responsible for her own fate
- use of repeated warnings ("Speak again", "How, how, Cordelia? Mend your speech a little,/ Lest you may mar your fortunes") makes clear Lear's sense that he is dealing with a self-willed daughter entirely responsible for what is happening to her
- repeated use of affirmation ("by the sacred radiance of the sun,/The mysteries of Hecate and the night;/By all the operation of the orbs/From whom we do exist and cease to be,/Here I disclaim all my paternal care...") may be the basis of an argument that Lear, through a solemn appeal for justification to the cosmic powers, is avoiding responsibility for his own indefensible action (the breaking of a natural bond) and by extension for Cordelia's fate
- use of the extended simile comparing the welcome to be extended to the "barbarous Scythian,/ Or he that makes his generation messes/To gorge his appetite" and that due to his daughter may in its excessiveness be seen to enforce the hubris with which the tragic hero accepts – or embraces – responsibility for Cordelia's fate

Wider Text

- use of a variety of staging methods in Act 1 scene 1 (e.g. setting, stage properties, music) to present a public spectacle of narcissism and self-regard which demonstrates Lear's ultimate power and creates the context for a dramatic presentation of the issue of who is responsible for what happens to Cordelia

- use of asides in Act 1 scene 1 to present the first words Cordelia speaks in the play (“What shall Cordelia speak? Love, and be silent”, “my love’s/More ponderous than my tongue”) perhaps conveying her powerlessness to control her own fate
- use of repeated metaphors associating Cordelia with a powerful regenerative force (e.g. “she shook/The holy water from her heavenly eyes”, “All you unpublish’d virtues of the earth,/Spring with my tears!”) to present Cordelia as an emblem of purity and of moral transcendence, thus dissolving the issue of responsibility in tragic suffering
- use of repetition in Cordelia’s response to Lear in the reunion scene (“No cause, no cause”) which emphasises her lack of vengefulness when Lear accepts responsibility for what has happened to her
- use of staging: the tableau of Lear with Cordelia’s lifeless body in his arms (Act 5 scene 3) a scene of almost unbearable pathos which presents Cordelia as a passive victim, thus dissolving the issue of responsibility in tragic suffering

AO3: Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.

The nature of Shakespearean Tragedy:

- flawed tragic hero who suffers immensely
- suffering will be disproportionate to the flaw/hamartia of the tragic hero, evoking both pity and terror from the audience
- suffering will extend to other characters to magnify the impact on the audience, inviting the audience to simultaneously feel pity and recoil in terror that they too, could suffer in a similar way
- purgation of pity and fear (catharsis) as the intended effect on the audience
- attainment of tragic knowledge (anagnorisis) to a greater or lesser extent
- catastrophe is inevitable, despite anagnorisis and attempts to make reparations, increasing the terror of the spectacle
- inclusion of a sentimental or pathetic element in Shakespearean tragedy which is rarely seen in Greek Tragedy, e.g., Lady Macduff in ‘Macbeth’, Ophelia in ‘Hamlet’, Desdemona in ‘Othello’

AO4: Explore connections across and within literary texts.

The characters/themes should be explored both in the extract and throughout the play.

3 *The Taming of the Shrew*

It is impossible to justify Petruccio's treatment of Katherine.

By referring closely to extract **3**, printed in the accompanying Resource Booklet and to other appropriately selected parts of the text, **show to what extent** you would agree with the view expressed above.

Your **argument** should include relevant comments on Shakespeare's dramatic methods, and relevant external contextual information on the nature of Shakespearean Comedy.

N.B. Equal marks are available for your treatment of the given extract and other relevant parts of the text.

The following mark scheme should be applied in conjunction with the A2 1 Shakespearean Genres Mark Band Grid and the following table:

[0]	NONE
[1]–[10]	LITTLE UNDERSTANDING
[11]–[20]	BASIC
[21]–[25]	LIMITED
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[41]–[50]	ASSURED

The information below is intended to **exemplify** the type of content you may see in responses. Reference should be made to some of the following points, and all other valid comments will be rewarded.

Responses should demonstrate the following:

AO1: Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.

Answers should contain:

- knowledge and understanding of the play in appropriate reference and quotation
- order and relevance in conveying ideas
- appropriate and accurate expression
- appropriate use of literary terminology
- skilful and meaningful insertion of quotation.

AO5: Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

This **driving objective** will require the candidate to:

- take due account of the key terms of the question, examining the relationship between them, i.e. **“impossible”**, **“justify”**, **“Petruccio's treatment”**, **“Katherine”**
- offer opinion or judgement in response to the given reading of the text
- make an attempt at reasoning in support of his/her opinion
- provide textual referencing to illustrate his/her opinion

- show awareness of other readings than that expressed in the stimulus statement, e.g. that **Petruccio's statement of motive for his treatment of Katherine reveals care and love for her and ensures the happy ending necessary for comedy.**

In addition to the extract, some situations which may be found useful in considering the question are:

- early interactions in Minola's house where Katherine's own violence is displayed, which may be seen as meriting Petruccio's course of action
- interactions leading up to and immediately after the wedding which leave Katherine humiliated and powerless
- Petruccio's open declaration: "I will be master of what is mine own"
- the account given (by Grumio) of how Katherine was mistreated on the road to Petruccio's house
- Petruccio's behaviour on the way back to Padua
- final scenes of affection and agreement between the pair

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

Candidates should **identify** and **explore** aspects of Shakespeare's dramatic methods in relation to the key terms of the question.

Extract

- use of a semi-technical medical term ("[Meat] engenders choler, planteth anger") may be seen as a veiled threat and hence an unjustifiable treatment, a reminder to Katherine of the violence he has just shown towards his servants and may repeat on her
- use of contrast between the harshness of Petruccio's methods of deprivation and their cloak of politeness may be considered an unjustified refinement of his bullying treatment (or a richly comic piece of scheming)
- use of regal metaphor ("Thus have I politicly begun my reign") to suggest the cunning which underlies Petruccio's treatment of Katherine – arguable as the characteristics of a bully behaving in ways impossible to justify
- use of soliloquy in which Petruccio reveals his plan and the treatment of Katherine which it will require, but also his motivation of "reverend care" and "kindness", which may be argued to justify the behaviour
- use of extended metaphor from hawking in which Katherine is compared to a falcon undergoing training for future tasks ("My falcon now is sharp and passing empty ... Another way I have to man my haggard...") may provoke an argument that it is impossible to justify Petruccio's treatment of Katherine as it demeans or objectifies her
- use of temporal adverbs ("to-day ... Last night ... to-night ...all night") to convey Petruccio's readiness to prolong his treatment of Katherine as necessary – a sophistication of cruelty which may be seen as impossible to justify
- use of comic contrast between the brief unadorned statement of his motive, expressed in the quiet of soliloquy ("all is done in reverend care of her") and the violent and detailed "hurly" of unpleasant treatment of Katherine that precedes and follows it may incline some to argue that audience attention is thereby drawn to Petruccio's self-justification
- use of a proverbial saying ("This is a way to kill a wife with kindness") to express the confounding of differing types of behaviour in order to disorientate Katherine: is this justifiable treatment?
- use of final couplet uttered in soliloquy ("He that knows better how to tame a shrew,/Now let him speak: 'tis charity to show") suggests both an unjustifiable demeaning of Katherine (through the shrew metaphor) and that the bullying attitudes behind his behaviour are carried into his inner life, making it even less possible to justify his treatment; alternatively the couplet may be seen as direct address to the audience, implying their complicity or agreement and his confidence that no justification is required from that quarter

Wider Text

- use of soliloquy in Act 2 scene 1 where the strategy of ‘killing with kindness’ is first conceived (“Say that she rail; why then I’ll tell her plain/She sings as sweetly as a nightingale”): the sudden surprise of this gambit may postpone or remove audience reservations about justifiability
- use of wordplay (“moveable...bear... light...wasp...” etc.) suggests the tension and impending violence between Katherine and Petruccio: to resolve this arguably demands extreme measures and may be seen to justify his treatment
- use of stage action (*exit weeping*) to express Katherine’s sense of humiliation under Petruccio’s unpleasant bullying treatment
- use of comic hyperbole in Biondello’s description of his master’s approach to Minola’s house on his wedding-day (“a very monster in apparel”) – an unjustifiable treatment of a woman in a vulnerable position in order to impose his will on her?
- use of a series of metaphors (“She is my goods, my chattels...my ox, my ass...”) Petruccio’s public expression of the ownership that he intends to exercise over Katherine, may be seen as most unpleasant (and in modern terms entirely unjustifiable) treatment
- use of stage action as food and clothes are offered to Katherine and then withdrawn – an unjustifiable refinement of cruel treatment?
- use of symbolic action (the kiss) may be argued as a possible justification of Petruccio’s treatment of Katherine and to reinforce the happy ending of the comedy
- use of imagery: the repeated metaphors of dominance and possession in Katherine’s banquet speech may be seen to be the indoctrination consequent upon Petruccio’s treatment, which may or may not be argued to be justified by its success

AO3: Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.

The nature of Shakespearean Comedy:

- love usually a central theme
- plot involves lovers overcoming obstacles to their happiness – these obstacles may be external or internal
- may feature some aspect of the ‘battle of the sexes’
- complex plots – may involve pairs of lovers
- may feature girls disguised as boys, or blurring of gender roles
- often features strong and intelligent young heroines
- builds towards a happy ending, usually in marriage
- may feature lively or impertinent servants as part of a comic disordering of normality or stability
- may feature the tricking of the old by the young as part of the same disordering
- plot may rely on mistaken identity and/or disguise (disguise by a dramatic convention was held to be impenetrable)
- may feature various types of comedy – verbal, slapstick, caricature, social satire

AO4: Explore connections across and within literary texts.

The characters/themes should be explored both in the extract and throughout the play.

4 As You Like It

Rosalind is quick-witted and capable throughout the play.

By referring closely to extract 4, printed in the accompanying Resource Booklet and to other appropriately selected parts of the text, **show to what extent** you would agree with the view expressed above.

Your **argument** should include relevant comments on Shakespeare's dramatic methods, and relevant external contextual information on the nature of Shakespearean Comedy.

N.B. Equal marks are available for your treatment of the given extract and other relevant parts of the text.

The following mark scheme should be applied in conjunction with the A2 1 Shakespearean Genres Mark Band Grid and the following table:

[0]	NONE
[1]–[10]	LITTLE UNDERSTANDING
[11]–[20]	BASIC
[21]–[25]	LIMITED
[26]–[30]	INCREASINGLYPURPOSEFUL
[31]–[40]	COHERENT
[41]–[50]	ASSURED

The information below is intended to **exemplify** the type of content you may see in responses. Reference should be made to some of the following points, and all other valid comments will be rewarded.

Responses should demonstrate the following:

AO1: Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.

Answers should contain:

- knowledge and understanding of the play in appropriate reference and quotation
- order and relevance in conveying ideas
- appropriate and accurate expression
- appropriate use of literary terminology
- skilful and meaningful insertion of quotation.

AO5: Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

This **driving objective** will require the candidate to:

- take due account of the key terms of the question, examining the relationship between them, i.e. **“Rosalind”, “quick-witted”, “capable”, “throughout the play”**
- offer opinion or judgement in response to the given reading of the text
- make an attempt at reasoning in support of his/her opinion
- provide textual referencing to illustrate his/her opinion
- show awareness of other readings than that expressed in the stimulus statement, e.g. **when Oliver tells Rosalind of Orlando's injury, she seems vulnerable and at a loss.**

In addition to the extract, some situations which may be found useful in considering this question are:

- her brief despondency, expressed to Celia before the wrestling, and her quick recovery
- her immediate adaptation of Celia’s plan to flee to the forest
- her decisive course of action (and her doubts) as well as her quick wit in dealing with Orlando in Arden; her intervention in the love affairs of other couples
- her distress in her interaction with Oliver
- the fulfilment of her promises to straighten out all difficulties at the end of the play

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

Candidates should **identify** and **explore** aspects of Shakespeare’s dramatic methods in relation to the key terms of the question.

Extract

- staging: use of imposing entrance and exit (with Lords) by the obviously angry Duke Frederick will pressurise Rosalind – her level of composure in dealing with this may produce an argument about her capability
- use of progression in terms of address from familial to formal (“uncle...your grace...dear uncle...your highness...my lord...good my liege”) may suggest either some capability or some uncertainty on Rosalind’s part in dealing with one who is revealing himself as an adversary
- use of an emphatic metaphor (“Never so much as in a thought unborn/Did I offend your highness”) with which Rosalind pushes back against Frederick’s as yet unexplained accusations may suggest her capability and quick-wittedness in reacting to these accusations
- use of a variety of rhetorical devices (parallel clauses – “So was I when...So was I when”; apothegm – “Treason is not inherited...”; dismissive rhetorical question – “What’s that to me?”; urgent repetition of Frederick’s accusation – “traitor”, “treacherous”) by Rosalind in her defence strongly suggests her quick-wittedness in argument
- use of personification to provide a final rhetorical flourish to her argument (“mistake me not so much/To think my poverty is treacherous”) may be seen as signifying confident capability, or less likely, in that it reminds Frederick of her vulnerability, the reverse
- use of listing of Rosalind’s qualities (“subtle...smoothness...silence...patience” and by indirection “bright...virtuous”) may be brought into an argument about Duke Frederick’s view of her capabilities

Wider Text

- use of an extended personification of Fortune in Rosalind’s bantering exchange with Celia on her first appearance in the play (“the bountiful blind woman...[who] reigns in gifts of the world”) may suggest Rosalind’s quick-wittedness and her underlying capability to deal with whatever fortune may confront her with
- use of the prop of the chain from her neck, and of stage action in the hesitation of Rosalind’s departure from the scene of the wrestling, provides a rich field for differing interpretations of Rosalind’s capability and quick-wittedness
- use of the male disguise and the purposes she puts it to suggests her capability, e.g. the “saucy lackey” who is emboldened to accost Orlando
- frequent use of listing in Rosalind’s dialogue with Orlando (her list of various experiences of time – “Time travels in divers paces...”; her list of lover’s “marks”; her list of the varying types of behaviour she claims to have affected in curing one who was in love) constitutes a sign of her verbal quick-wittedness and dominance in these conversations
- use of stage action as Rosalind swoons on hearing of Orlando’s injury: one occasion where her vulnerability is apparent and her capability deserts her
- use of gnomic statements in the final scene (e.g. “I’ll have no father if you be not he”) baffles her listeners, demonstrates her control of the situation, and is likely to lead to the conclusion that she is a woman both quick-witted and capable

AO3: Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.

The nature of Shakespearean Comedy:

- love and attitudes to love usually a central theme
- complex plots – may involve pairs of lovers
- plot involves lovers overcoming obstacles to their happiness – these obstacles may be external or internal
- may feature some aspect of the ‘battle of the sexes’
- often features strong and intelligent young heroines
- builds towards a happy ending, usually in one or more marriages, though this may be shadowed in some way
- there is sometimes contrast or tension between court and country
- plot may rely on mistaken identity and/or disguise (disguise by a dramatic convention was held to be impenetrable)
- may feature various types of comedy – verbal, slapstick, caricature, social satire
- may feature girls disguised as boys, or blurring of gender roles
- may feature lively or impertinent servants as part of a comic disordering of normality or stability
- may feature the tricking of the old by the young as part of the same disordering

AO4: Explore connections across and within literary texts.

The characters/themes should be explored both in the extract and throughout the play.

5 *Measure for Measure*

Claudio is an immoral man.

By referring closely to extract **5**, printed in the accompanying Resource Booklet and to other appropriately selected parts of the text, **show to what extent** you would agree with the view expressed above.

Your **argument** should include relevant comments on Shakespeare's dramatic methods, and relevant external contextual information on the nature of Shakespeare's Problem Plays.

N.B. Equal marks are available for your treatment of the given extract and other relevant parts of the text.

The following mark scheme should be applied in conjunction with the A2 1 Shakespearean Genres Mark Band Grid and the following table:

[0]	NONE
[1]–[10]	LITTLE UNDERSTANDING
[11]–[20]	BASIC
[21]–[25]	LIMITED
[26]–[30]	INCREASINGLYPURPOSEFUL
[31]–[40]	COHERENT
[41]–[50]	ASSURED

The information below is intended to **exemplify** the type of content you may see in responses. Reference should be made to some of the following points, and all other valid comments will be rewarded.

Responses should demonstrate the following:

AO1: Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.

Answers should contain:

- knowledge and understanding of the play in appropriate reference and quotation
- order and relevance in conveying ideas
- appropriate and accurate expression
- appropriate use of literary terminology
- skilful and meaningful insertion of quotation.

AO5: Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

This **driving objective** will require the candidate to:

- take due account of the key terms of the question, examining the relationship between them, i.e. “**Claudio**”, “**immoral man**”
- offer opinion or judgement in response to the given readings of the text
- make an attempt at reasoning in support of his/her opinion

- provide textual referencing to illustrate his/her opinion
- show awareness of other readings than that expressed in the stimulus statement, e.g. that **Claudio acts illegally but not immorally since he is constant and sincere in his love for Juliet.**

In addition to the extract, some situations which may be found useful in considering this question are:

- Claudio’s conversation with Lucio in Act 1 scene 2 which invites a consideration of whether Claudio is an immoral man
- Juliet’s conference with the Duke in Act 2 scene 3 in which she takes joint responsibility – the “most offenceful act/Was mutually committed”
- Claudio’s interactions with the Duke in Act 3 scene 1, when he twice claims he is ready to die in atonement for his illegal act, contrasting with his expressed view in the extract; these vacillations may or may not be deemed weak and therefore immoral
- the play’s denouement in Act 5 scene 1 when the Duke’s ploy to spare Claudio’s life is dramatically revealed; the comic ending suggests that any immorality he has shown is forgivable

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

Candidates should **identify** and **explore** aspects of Shakespeare’s dramatic methods in relation to the key terms of the question.

Extract

- use of the setting of the prison to convey the extent of Claudio’s disgrace and hardship – this may or may not be viewed as an appropriate consequence of his behaviour, depending on whether he is interpreted as being an immoral man, or not
- use of metaphor (“the cunning livery of hell”) to convey Angelo’s nefarious hypocrisy and corruption as deputy ruler, against which Claudio’s character and actions may not seem so immoral
- use of allusion to the doctrine of the seven deadly sins, in particular lust, to illustrate that Claudio recognises the ‘deadly’ nature of his deeds; yet some may perceive his attempts to argue that his sin of lust is the ‘least’ of the seven to be morally dubious
- use of a set of metaphors (“cold obstruction...This sensible warm motion...the delighted spirit...A kneaded clod...imprison’d in the viewless winds”) by which Claudio contrasts life and death as a way of manipulating his sister into sacrificing herself to Angelo may be considered morally dubious.
- repeated use of lewd colloquialisms (“momentary trick”, “trade”, “bawd”) to remind us of the simmering underworld of Vienna – its louche sexual trading and frequent flouting of the laws – within which the extent of the immorality of Claudio’s behaviour may be considered
- use of personification of mercy as a “bawd” may be considered a damning indictment by Isabella of Claudio’s moral integrity

Wider Text

- use of contrast between Claudio’s courtly eloquence and Lucio’s blunt language (Lucio: “Is lechery so look’d after?” Claudio: “Thus stands it with me: upon a true contract/I got possession of Julietta’s bed./You know the lady; she is fast my wife”) may win sympathy for Claudio as he mounts a sincere defence of his love for his contracted wife-to-be, Juliet – which may help to counteract the charge of immorality against him
- use of metaphor — “Who newly in the seat, that it may know/He can command, lets it straight feel the spur” — as Claudio, acting as moral commentator, compares Angelo to an abuser of power who reintroduces dubious and out-dated laws by which Claudio is to be considered immoral

- use of disguise by which the Duke elicits a confession from the heavily-pregnant Juliet that their “most offenceful act/Was mutually committed” which may soften some people’s opinion of Claudio’s immorality
- use of paradox as Claudio attempts to prepare for death when faced with Angelo’s implacability: “To sue to live, I find I seek to die,/And, seeking death, find life. Let it come on” which may be suggestive of courage and honour, qualities that may belie the presentation of Claudio as an immoral man
- use of Claudio’s highly-staged entrance in the final scene as a “muffled fellow” followed by the Duke’s pronouncement of Claudio’s pardon which may be argued to show that the charge of immorality against Claudio is bogus or that it has been forgiven
- use of contrast between Isabella’s strenuous condemnation of Claudio in their ‘prison scene’ and strained silence in the final scene may be argued to suggest that Isabella retains her view of her brother as an immoral man

AO3: Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.

The nature of Shakespeare’s Problem Plays:

- usually listed as *All’s Well that Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure* and *Troilus and Cressida* but definition and inclusion are disputed
- this group sometimes referred to as the ‘problem comedies’ or ‘dark comedies’
- psychological dramas dealing with the dark side of personality and behaviour, often involving the characters and the audience being faced with moral conundrums
- there is a mixture of realistic and fairytale-like aspects
- the resolution may not be felt to be wholly satisfactory: it may be felt that a comedic ending has been imposed on a play which has shown too much of the darker side of human life for such an ending to be convincing

AO4: Explore connections across and within literary texts.

The characters/themes should be explored both in the extract and throughout the play.

6 *The Winter's Tale*

Bohemia is a world of perfection.

By referring to extract **6**, printed in the accompanying Resource Booklet and to other appropriately selected parts of the text, **show to what extent** you would agree with the view expressed above.

Your **argument** should include relevant comments on Shakespeare's dramatic methods, and relevant external contextual information on the nature of Shakespeare's Last Plays.

N.B. Equal marks are available for your treatment of the given extract and other relevant parts of the text.

The following mark scheme should be applied in conjunction with the A2 1 Shakespearean Genres Mark Band Grid and the following table:

[0]	NONE
[1]–[10]	LITTLE UNDERSTANDING
[11]–[20]	BASIC
[21]–[25]	LIMITED
[26]–[30]	INCREASINGLYPURPOSEFUL
[31]–[40]	COHERENT
[41]–[50]	ASSURED

The information below is intended to **exemplify** the type of content you may see in responses. Reference should be made to some of the following points, and all other valid comments will be rewarded.

Responses should demonstrate the following:

AO1: Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.

Answers should contain:

- knowledge and understanding of the play in appropriate reference and quotation
- order and relevance in conveying ideas
- appropriate and accurate expression
- appropriate use of literary terminology
- skilful and meaningful insertion of quotation.

AO5: Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

This **driving objective** will require the candidate to:

- take due account of the key terms of the question, examining the relationship between them, i.e. **“Bohemia”**, **“world of perfection”**
- offer opinion or judgement in response to the given reading of the text
- make an attempt at reasoning in support of his/her opinion
- provide textual referencing to illustrate his/her opinion

- show awareness of other readings than that expressed in the stimulus statement, e.g. that **whilst in the main, Bohemia is presented as a world of perfection, the introduction and conclusion to the Bohemia scenes convey a harsher, less perfect world.**

In addition to the extract, some situations which may be found useful in considering this question are:

- the discussion between Polixenes and Camillo in Act 4 scene 2 which reveals Polixenes' suspicions about his son, Florizel
- Autolycus' songs and soliloquies in Act 4 scene 3 which reveal his roguish nature
- the interaction between Florizel and Perdita in Act 4 scene 4 where they declare their love for each other and discuss their forthcoming nuptial
- the interaction between Polixenes and Florizel in Act 4 scene 4 where the former casts aside his disguise and declares that the marriage between Florizel and Perdita will not proceed

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts.

Candidates should **identify** and **explore** aspects of Shakespeare's dramatic methods in relation to the key terms of the question.

Extract

- use of symbolic gesture with the prop of the flowers ("Here's flowers for you:/Hot lavender, mints, savory, marjoram") reinforcing Bohemia as a world of perfection as, by giving Polixenes and Camillo flowers of summer, Perdita is trying to make amends for her previous indiscretion (in giving them flowers of winter); she is presented with a blend of rustic charm and queenly grace and wit
- use of simile ("To strew him o'er and o'er!/. . . like a bank for Love to lie and play on") to convey the influence of Bohemia on sex as the natural, delightful expression of love which may be argued to show that Bohemia is a world of perfection
- use of anaphora ("When you speak.../when you sing.../when you do dance...") to show how Florizel views Perdita's every action as flawless as Perdita is a product of her upbringing in the world of Bohemia: this could be used to support an argument that Bohemia is a world of perfection
- use of the symbol of the turtle dove to represent undying love ("Your hand, my Perdita: so turtles pair,/That never mean to part") to imply that Bohemia is a world of perfection through the presentation of the romantic relationship between Florizel and Perdita who, like turtle doves, plan to mate for life
- use of hyperbole — "all your acts are queens" — associated with the expressions of courtly love to communicate the idea of the beloved as perfection
- use of pastoral conventions (e.g. the shepherdess, the flowers, the process of disguise) as a shorthand for the world of perfection

Wider Text

- use of the stage exit of Antigonus, *Exit, pursued by a bear* [Act 3 scene 3] to show that Bohemia is not a world of perfection as it is assumed that Antigonus has been cruelly attacked and killed by a wild animal shortly after his arrival in Bohemia
- use of Autolycus' soliloquies, e.g. "... With die and drab I purchased this caparison, and my revenue is the silly cheat..." [Act 4 scene 3] to present Autolycus as a dishonest rogue, robbing, pick-pocketing and deceiving, which may be argued to show that Bohemia is not a world of perfection
- repeated use of Classical allusion in the interaction between Florizel and Perdita, e.g. "Flora/ Peering in April's front... Jupiter/Became a bull... the green Neptune/A ram... and the fire-robed god,/Golden Apollo, a poor, humble swain" [Act 4 scene 4] emphasises the themes of love and transformation and conveys how Bohemia, which has enabled Perdita to rise above the rank of a lowly shepherdess, is a world of perfection; also serves to heighten the tone of the pastoral idyll

- use of songs, music and dances during the scene of the sheep-shearing festival [Act 4 scene 4] to reinforce the happy, celebratory atmosphere and to imbue the Bohemian scenes with a comic strength and richness which contribute to the argument that Bohemia is a world of perfection
- repeated use of insulting epithets e.g. “fresh piece/Of excellent witchcraft... this knack” [Act 4 scene 4] in Polixenes’ vicious and cruel attack on Perdita, reinforced by his tyrannical behaviour in declaring that the marriage will not happen, the Shepherd will be executed and Florizel will be disinherited, all of which could be used to form an argument that Bohemia is not a world of perfection

AO3: Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received.

The nature of Shakespeare’s Last Plays:

- inclusion in this group, and characteristics of the Last Plays are sometimes disputed, but generally held to include *Cymbeline*, *Pericles*, *The Winter’s Tale* and *The Tempest*
- written after the tragedies, featuring mixed elements – comedy, music, a heightened sense of visual spectacle, supernatural elements, features of the fashionable masque form, tragicomedy
- the Last Plays concentrate more on the presentation of incident and action rather than on individual characterisation
- probably responding to a change in popular taste in early years of seventeenth century
- themes: reconciliation, mercy, forgiveness, restoration and regeneration (forming a contrast to the themes of the tragedies); final harmony sometimes achieved through the actions or influences of young lovers; a sense that younger characters can put right the historical wrongs and imbue the future with hope
- there is primarily a courtly setting, or at least a protagonist of noble birth, but contrasting ‘low folk’, usually rustic peasants, will also have a role to play in the action
- the trope of the pastoral idyll interpenetrates a number of Shakespeare’s plays with its connotations of an innocent and unspoilt way of life
- the structure is episodic and takes in events occurring over a long period, sometimes in violation of Aristotle’s ‘Unity of Time’

AO4: Explore connections across and within literary texts.

The characters/themes should be explored both in the extract and throughout the play.