



Rewarding Learning

ADVANCED

General Certificate of Education

2025

English Literature

Assessment Unit A2 2

assessing

The Study of Poetry Pre 1900
and Unseen Poetry



AEL21

[AEL21]

TUESDAY 3 JUNE, AFTERNOON

TIME

2 hours.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Write your Centre Number and Candidate Number on the Answer Booklet provided.
Answer **two** questions. Answer **one** question from Section A on your chosen poet and the question from Section B.

A Resource Booklet is provided for use with Section A.

The unseen poem for Section B is printed in the examination paper.

This unit is closed book.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

The total mark for this paper is 100.

Both sections carry equal marks, i.e. 50 marks for each question.

Quality of written communication will be assessed in **all** responses.

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Section A: The Study of Poetry Pre 1900

In Section A you will be marked on your ability to:

- articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression (AO1)
- analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts (AO2)
- demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received (AO3)
- explore connections within and between literary texts (AO4)

Answer **one** question from Section A on your chosen poet.

1 Chaucer: *The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale*

Answer either (a) or (b)

- (a) By referring closely to Extract **1(a)** printed in the accompanying Resource Booklet and other appropriately selected parts of the text, and making use of relevant external contextual information on medieval ideas of marriage, examine the **poetic methods** which Chaucer uses to write about the Wife of Bath's ideas about marriage.

N.B. Equal marks are available for your treatment of the given extract and other relevant parts of the text. [50]

- (b) By referring closely to Extract **1(b)** printed in the accompanying Resource Booklet and other appropriately selected parts of the text, and making use of relevant external contextual information on the position of women in medieval society, examine the **poetic methods** which Chaucer uses to write about the exercise of female power.

N.B. Equal marks are available for your treatment of the given extract and other relevant parts of the text. [50]

2 Donne

Answer either (a) or (b)

- (a) By referring closely to "The Sun Rising" (Poem **2(a)**) printed in the accompanying Resource Booklet and one other appropriately selected poem, and making use of relevant external biographical information, examine the **poetic methods** which Donne uses to write about attitudes to love.

N.B. Equal marks are available for your treatment of each poem. [50]

- (b) By referring closely to "Death be not proud" (Poem **2(b)**) printed in the accompanying Resource Booklet and one other appropriately selected poem, and making use of relevant external contextual information on the nature of Metaphysical poetry, examine the **poetic methods** which Donne uses to write about attitudes to death.

N.B. Equal marks are available for your treatment of each poem. [50]

3 Blake

Answer either (a) or (b)

- (a) By referring closely to “Infant Sorrow” (Poem 3(a)) printed in the accompanying Resource Booklet and one other appropriately selected poem, and making use of relevant external biographical information, examine the **poetic methods** which Blake uses to write about the relationship between parent and child.

N.B. Equal marks are available for your treatment of each poem. [50]

- (b) By referring closely to “The Chimney Sweeper” from *Songs of Innocence* (Poem 3(b)) printed in the accompanying Resource Booklet and one other appropriately selected poem, and making use of relevant external contextual information on social conditions in late-eighteenth-century England, examine the **poetic methods** which Blake uses to write about the suffering of the poor.

N.B. Equal marks are available for your treatment of each poem. [50]

4 Keats

Answer either (a) or (b)

- (a) By referring closely to “Ode to Psyche” (Poem 4(a)) printed in the accompanying Resource Booklet and one other appropriately selected poem, and making use of relevant external biographical information, examine the **poetic methods** which Keats uses to write about the classical Greek world.

N.B. Equal marks are available for your treatment of each poem. [50]

- (b) By referring closely to “To Autumn” (Poem 4(b)) printed in the accompanying Resource Booklet and one other appropriately selected poem, and making use of relevant external contextual information on Romantic views about nature, examine the **poetic methods** which Keats uses to write about nature.

N.B. Equal marks are available for your treatment of each poem. [50]

5 Dickinson

Answer either (a) or (b)

- (a) By referring closely to “How the old Mountains drip with Sunset” (Poem **5(a)**) printed in the accompanying Resource Booklet and one other appropriately selected poem, and making use of relevant external biographical information, examine the **poetic methods** which Dickinson uses to write about nature.

N.B. Equal marks are available for your treatment of each poem. [50]

- (b) By referring closely to “It was not Death, for I stood up” (Poem **5(b)**) printed in the accompanying Resource Booklet and one other appropriately selected poem, and making use of relevant external biographical information, examine the **poetic methods** which Dickinson uses to write about despair.

N.B. Equal marks are available for your treatment of each poem. [50]

6 Barrett Browning

Answer either (a) or (b)

- (a) By referring closely to Extract **6(a)** from “Mother and Poet” printed in the accompanying Resource Booklet and other appropriately selected parts of “Mother and Poet”, and making use of relevant external contextual information on political conditions in nineteenth-century Italy, examine the **poetic methods** which Barrett Browning uses to write about motherhood.

N.B. Equal marks are available for your treatment of the given extract and other relevant parts of the text. [50]

- (b) By referring closely to “The face of all the world is changed” (Poem **6(b)**) printed in the accompanying Resource Booklet and one other appropriately selected poem, and making use of relevant external biographical information, examine the **poetic methods** which Barrett Browning uses to write about the impact of love.

N.B. Equal marks are available for your treatment of each poem. [50]

Section B: Unseen Poetry

In Section B you will be marked on your ability to:

- articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression (AO1)
- analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts (AO2)
- explore literary texts informed by different interpretations (AO5)

Answer the question set in Section B.

In this poem the speaker reflects upon an encounter with a team of ploughing horses that provokes a memory of a similar event from his childhood.

Analyse the poetic methods used by Muir to **explore** the thoughts and feelings of the speaker.

Poem "Horses" by Edwin Muir has been removed due to copyright

See poem here: <https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/horses-17/>

[50]

THIS IS THE END OF THE QUESTION PAPER

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TUESDAY 3 JUNE, AFTERNOON

**RESOURCE BOOKLET
(For Section A only)**

Extract 1(a) Chaucer: *The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale*

(extract for use with Question 1(a))

Experience, though noon auctoritee
Were in this world, is right ynogh for me
To speke of wo that is in mariage;
For, lordinges, sith I twelve yeer was of age,
Thonked be God that is eterne on live,
Housbondes at chirche dore I have had five –
If I so ofte mighte have ywedded bee –
And alle were worthy men in hir degree.
But me was toold, certeyn, nat longe agoon is,
That sith that Crist ne wente nevere but onis
To wedding, in the Cane of Galilee,
That by the same ensample taughte he me
That I ne sholde wedded be but ones.
Herkne eek, lo, which a sharp word for the nones,
Biside a welle, Jhesus, God and man,
Spak in repreeve of the Samaritan:
'Thou hast yhad five housbondes,' quod he,
'And that ilke man that now hath thee
Is noght thyn housbonde,' thus seyde he certeyn.
What that he mente therby, I kan nat seyn;
But that I axe, why that the fifthe man
Was noon housbonde to the Samaritan?
How manye mighte she have in mariage?
Yet herde I nevere tellen in myn age
Upon this nombre diffinicioun.
Men may devine and glosen, up and doun,
But wel I woot, expres, withoute lie,
God bad us for to wexe and multiplie;
That gentil text kan I wel understonde.
Eek wel I woot, he seyde myn housbonde
Sholde lete fader and mooder, and take to me.
But of no nombre mencion made he,
Of bigamie, or of octogamie;
Why sholde men thanne speke of it vileynie?

Extract 1(b) Chaucer: *The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale*

(extract for use with Question 1(b))

Again the knight this olde wyf gan rise,
And seyde, – ‘Sire knight, heer forth ne lith no wey.
Tel me what that ye seken, by youre fey!
Paraventure it may the bettre be;
Thise olde folk kan muchel thing,’ quod she.

‘My leeve mooder,’ quod this knight, ‘certeyn
I nam but deed, but if that I kan seyn
What thing it is that wommen moost desire.
Koude ye me wisse, I wolde wel quite youre hire.’

‘Plight me thy trouthe heere in myn hand,’ quod she,
‘The nexte thing that I requere thee,
Thou shalt it do, if it lie in thy might,
And I wol telle it yow er it be night.’

‘Have heer my trouthe,’ quod the knight, ‘I grante.’

‘Thanne,’ quod she, I dar me wel avante
Thy lyf is sauf; for I wol stonde therby,
Upon my lyf, the queene wol seye as I.
Lat se which is the proudeste of hem alle,
That wereth on a coverchief or a calle,
That dar seye nay of that I shal thee teche.
Lat us go forth, withouten lenger speche.’
Tho rowned she a pistel in his ere,
And bad him to be glad, and have no fere.

Whan they be comen to the court, this knight
Seyde he had holde his day, as he hadde hight,
And redy was his answer, as he sayde.
Ful many a noble wyf, and many a maide,
And many a widwe, for that they been wise,
The queene hirself sittinge as a justise,
Assembled been, his answer for to heere;
And afterward this knight was bode appeere.

To every wight comanded was silence,
And that the knight sholde telle in audience
What thing that worldly wommen loven best.
This knight ne stood nat stille as doth a best,
But to his questioun anon answerde
With manly vois, that al the court it herde:

‘My lige lady, generally,’ quod he,
‘Wommen desiren to have sovereignetee
As wel over hir housbond as hir love,
And for to been in maistrie hym above...’

Poem 2(a) Donne: "The Sun Rising"

(poem for use with Question **2(a)**)

Busy old fool, unruly sun,
Why dost thou thus,
Through windows, and through curtains call on us?
Must to thy motions lovers' seasons run?
Saucy pedantic wretch, go chide
Late school-boys, and sour prentices,
Go tell court-huntsmen that the King will ride,
Call country ants to harvest offices;
Love, all alike, no season knows, nor clime,
Nor hours, days, months, which are the rags of time.

Thy beams, so reverend and strong
Why shouldst thou think?
I could eclipse and cloud them with a wink,
But that I would not lose her sight so long:
If her eyes have not blinded thine,
Look, and tomorrow late, tell me,
Whether both th'Indias of spice and mine
Be where thou left'st them, or lie here with me.
Ask for those kings whom thou saw'st yesterday,
And thou shalt hear, All here in one bed lay.

She's all states, and all princes, I,
Nothing else is.
Princes do but play us; compared to this,
All honour's mimic; all wealth alchemy.
Thou sun art half as happy'as we, –
In that the world's contracted thus;
Thine age asks ease, and since thy duties be
To warm the world, that's done in warming us.
Shine here to us, and thou art everywhere;
This bed thy centre is, these walls, thy sphere.

Poem 2(b) Donne: "Death be not proud"

(poem for use with Question **2(b)**)

Death be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for, thou art not so;
For, those, whom thou think'st, thou dost overthrow,
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me;
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure, then from thee, much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones, and souls delivery.
Thou'art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
And poppy, or charms can make us sleep as well,
And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

Poem 3(a) Blake: "Infant Sorrow"

(poem for use with Question **3(a)**)

My mother groan'd, my father wept.
Into the dangerous world I leapt:
Helpless, naked, piping loud,
Like a fiend hid in a cloud.

Struggling in my father's hands,
Striving against my swadling bands,
Bound and weary I thought best
To sulk upon my mother's breast.

Poem 3(b) Blake: "The Chimney Sweeper" (*Songs of Innocence*)

(poem for use with Question **3(b)**)

When my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry "'weep! 'weep! 'weep! 'weep!"
So your chimneys I sweep, & in soot I sleep.

There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,
That curl'd like a lamb's back, was shav'd; so I said,
"Hush, Tom! never mind it, for when your head's bare,
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair."

And so he was quiet, & that very night,
As Tom was a-sleeping he had such a sight!
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned & Jack,
Were all of them lock'd up in coffins of black.

And by came an Angel who had a bright key,
And he open'd the coffins & set them all free;
Then down a green plain leaping, laughing they run,
And wash in a river and shine in the Sun.

Then naked & white, all their bags left behind,
They rise upon clouds, and sport in the wind;
And the Angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,
He'd have God for his father, & never want joy.

And so Tom awoke; and we rose in the dark,
And got with our bags & our brushes to work.
Tho' the morning was cold, Tom was happy & warm;
So if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.

Poem 4(a) Keats: "Ode to Psyche"

(poem for use with Question 4(a))

I

O Goddess! Hear these tuneless numbers, wrung
By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,
And pardon that thy secrets should be sung,
Even into thine own soft-conchèd ear:
Surely I dreamt to-day, or did I see
The wingèd Psyche with awaken'd eyes?
I wander'd in a forest thoughtlessly,
And, on the sudden, fainting with surprise,
Saw two fair creatures, couchèd side by side
In deepest grass, beneath the whisp'ring roof
Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran
A brooklet, scarce espied:

II

'Mid hush'd, cool-rooted flowers fragrant-eyed,
Blue, silver-white, and budded Tyrian,
They lay calm-breathing on the bedded grass;
Their arms embracèd, and their pinions too;
Their lips touch'd not, but had not bade adieu
As if disjoinèd by soft-handed slumber,
And ready still past kisses to outnumber
At tender eye-dawn of aureorean love:
The winged boy I knew;
But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove?
His Psyche true!

III

O latest-born and loveliest vision far
Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy!
Fairer than Phoebe's sapphire-region'd star,
Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the sky;
Fairer than these, though temple thou hast none,
Nor altar heap'd with flowers;
Nor virgin-choir to make delicious moan
Upon the midnight hours;
No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet
From chain-swung censer teeming;
No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat
Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

IV

O brightest! though too late for antique vows,
 Too, too late for the fond believing lyre,
 When holy were the haunted forest boughs,
 Holy the air, the water, and the fire;
 Yet even in these days so far retired
 From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,
 Fluttering among the faint Olympians,
 I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspired.
 So let me be thy choir, and make a moan
 Upon the midnight hours;
 Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet
 From swingèd censer teeming;
 Thy shrine, thy grove, the oracle, thy heat
 Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

V

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane
 In some untrodden region of my mind,
 Where branchèd thoughts, new grown with pleasant pain,
 Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind:
 Far, far around shall those dark-cluster'd trees
 Fledge the wild-ridgèd mountains steep by steep;
 And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,
 The moss-lain Dryads shall be lull'd to sleep;
 And in the midst of this wide quietness
 A rosy sanctuary will I dress
 With the wreath'd trellis of a working brain,
 With buds, and bells, and stars without a name,
 With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,
 Who breeding flowers, will never breed the same:
 And there shall be for thee all soft delight
 That shadowy thought can win,
 A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,
 To let the warm Love in!

Poem 4(b) Keats: "To Autumn"

(poem for use with Question 4(b))

I

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness!
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

II

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers;
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.

III

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too, –
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river shallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-cricket sing; and now with treble soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft,
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

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(Poems continue overleaf)

Poem 5(a) Dickinson: “How the old Mountains drip with Sunset”

(poem for use with Question **5(a)**)

How the old Mountains drip with Sunset
How the Hemlocks burn –
How the Dun Brake is draped in Cinder
By the Wizard Sun –

How the old Steeples hand the Scarlet
Till the Ball is full –
Have I the lip of the Flamingo
That I dare to tell?

Then, how the Fire ebbs like Billows –
Touching all the Grass
With a departing – Sapphire – feature –
As a Duchess passed –

How a small Dusk crawls on the Village
Till the Houses blot
And the odd Flambeau, no men carry
Glimmer on the Street –

How it is Night – in Nest and Kennel –
And where was the Wood –
Just a Dome of Abyss is Bowing
Into Solitude –

These are the visions flitted Guido –
Titian – never told –
Domenichino dropped his pencil –
Paralyzed, with Gold –

Poem 5(b) Dickinson: “It was not Death, for I stood up”

(poem for use with Question **5(b)**)

It was not Death, for I stood up,
And all the Dead lie down –
It was not Night, for all the Bells
Put out their Tongues, for Noon.

It was not Frost, for on my Flesh
I felt Siroccos – crawl –
Nor Fire – for just my Marble feet
Could keep a Chancel cool –

And yet, it tasted, like them all,
The Figures I have seen
Set orderly, for Burial,
Reminded me, of mine –

As if my life were shaven,
And fitted to a frame,
And could not breathe without a key,
And 'twas like Midnight, some –

When everything that ticked – has stopped –
And Space stares – all around –
Or Grisly frosts – first Autumn morns,
Repeal the Beating Ground –

But, most, like Chaos – Stopless – cool –
Without a Chance, or Spar –
Or even a Report of Land –
To justify – Despair.

Extract 6(a) Barrett Browning: from “Mother and Poet”

(extract for use with Question **6(a)**)

XIV

O Christ of the five wounds, who look'dst through the dark
To the face of Thy mother! consider, I pray,
How we common mothers stand desolate, mark,
Whose sons, not being Christs, die with eyes turned away,
And no last word to say!

XV

Both boys dead? but that's out of nature. We all
Have been patriots, yet each house must always keep one.
'Twere imbecile, hewing out roads to a wall;
And, when Italy's made, for what end is it done
If we have not a son?

XVI

Ah, ah, ah! When Gaeta's taken, what then?
When the fair wicked queen sits no more at her sport
Of the fire-balls of death crashing souls out of men?
When the guns of Cavalli with final retort
Have cut the game short?

XVII

When Venice and Rome keep their new jubilee,
When your flag takes all heaven for its white, green, and red,
When *you* have your country from mountain to sea,
When King Victor has Italy's crown on his head,
(And *I* have my Dead) —

XVIII

What then? Do not mock me. Ah, ring your bells low,
And burn your lights faintly! *My* country is *there*,
Above the star pricked by the last peak of snow:
My Italy's *THERE*, with my brave civic Pair,
To disfranchise despair!

XIX

Forgive me. Some women bear children in strength,
And bite back the cry of their pain in self-scorn;
But the birth-pangs of nations will wring us at length
Into wail such as this — and we sit on forlorn
When the man-child is born.

XX

Dead! One of them shot by the sea in the east,
And one of them shot in the west by the sea.
Both! both my boys! If in keeping the feast
You want a great song for your Italy free,
Let none look at *me*!

Poem 6(b) Barrett Browning: "The face of all the world is changed"

(poem for use with Question **6(b)**)

The face of all the world is changed, I think,
Since first I heard the footsteps of thy soul
Move still, oh, still, beside me, as they stole
Betwixt me and the dreadful outer brink
Of obvious death, where I, who thought to sink,
Was caught up into love, and taught the whole
Of life in a new rhythm. The cup of dole
God gave for baptism, I am fain to drink,
And praise its sweetness, Sweet, with thee anear.
The names of country, heaven, are changed away
For where thou art or shalt be, there or here;
And this ... this lute and song ... loved yesterday
(The singing angels know) are only dear,
Because thy name moves right in what they say.

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