Pearson

Mark Scheme (Results)

January 2026

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level

in English Literature (WET04/01)

UNIT 4: Shakespeare and Pre-1900 Poetry

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General Marking Guidance

- All candidates must receive the same treatment. Examiners must mark the first candidate in exactly the same way as they mark the last.
- Mark schemes should be applied positively. Candidates must be rewarded for what they have shown they can do rather than penalised for omissions.
- Examiners should mark according to the mark scheme not according to their perception of where the grade boundaries may lie.
- There is no ceiling on achievement. All marks on the mark scheme should be used appropriately.
- All the marks on the mark scheme are designed to be awarded. Examiners should always award full marks if deserved, i.e. if the answer matches the mark scheme. Examiners should also be prepared to award zero marks if the candidate's response is not worthy of credit according to the mark scheme.
- Where some judgement is required, mark schemes will provide the principles by which marks will be awarded and exemplification may be limited.
- When examiners are in doubt regarding the application of the mark scheme to a candidate's response, the team leader must be consulted.
- Crossed out work should be marked UNLESS the candidate has replaced it with an alternative response.

Specific Marking Guidance

When deciding how to reward an answer, examiners should consult both the indicative content and the associated marking grid(s). When using a levels-based mark scheme, the 'best fit' approach should be used.

- Examiners should first decide which descriptor most closely matches the answer and place it in that level.
- The mark awarded within the level will be decided based on the quality of the answer and will be modified according to how securely all bullet points are displayed at that level.
- Indicative content is exactly that – they are factual points that candidates are likely to use to construct their answer.
- It is possible for an answer to be constructed without mentioning some or all of these points, as long as they provide alternative responses to the indicative content that fulfils the requirements of the question. It is the examiner's responsibility to apply their professional judgement to the candidate's response in determining if the answer fulfils the requirements of the question.

Placing a mark within a level

- Examiners should first decide which descriptor most closely matches the answer and place it in that level. The mark awarded within the level will be decided based on the quality of the answer and will be modified according to how securely all bullet points are displayed at that level.
- In cases of uneven performance, the points above will still apply. Candidates will be placed in the level that best describes their answer according to the descriptors in that level. Marks will be awarded towards the top or bottom of that level depending on how they have evidenced each of the descriptor bullet points.
- If the candidate's answer meets the requirements fully, markers should be prepared to award full marks within the level. The top mark in the level is used for work that is as good as can realistically be expected within that level.

Assessment objectives

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.
AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations.

Unit 4: Shakespeare and Pre-1900 Poetry

Section A: Shakespeare

Question Number	Indicative Content
1	***Measure for Measure*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: • interest generated by the generic roles of the minor characters in the play's tragi-comic development, e.g. to counterpoint the complex issues faced by Isabella • use of the minor characters to create a sense of absurdity and provide social commentary, e.g. the role of brothels in contemporary London • puns and innuendos in the dialogue of minor characters to create depth of character and humour, e.g. Pompey: Indeed, your 'O Lord, sir!' is very sequent to your 'O Lord, sir!' • subplots involving minor characters which intersect with the main narrative, providing a multifaceted view of Vienna, reflecting its social hierarchy and moral decay • different stagings of the play and their approaches to the minor characters, e.g. the use of 'Two Wendy House-sized brothels' and extensive audience interaction in a crowd scene at the start of Dromgoole's 2015 production • different interpretations and critical responses, e.g. Marxist approaches discussing the presentation of the minor characters to explore considerations of class and social justice. References to specific schools of thought and critics should be rewarded according to their relevance to candidates' arguments. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question Number	Indicative Content
2	***Measure for Measure*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: • tragi-comic structure provides a platform to explore the willpower of characters in different ways as they navigate a world filled with moral dilemmas and corruption • significance of rigid morality and a growing puritanical influence in the Jacobean era, when willpower and self-restraint were increasingly emphasized • diction and imagery used to convey the characters' internal struggles, e.g. 'More than our brother is our chastity' highlights the power of Isabella's will to maintain her virtue in the face of moral turpitude • dramatic momentum relating to willpower and self-control deriving from biblical references, e.g. 'Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged and the measure you give will be the measure you get' • role of specific dramatic moments in developing the theme, e.g. Angelo's confession, 'What's this? What's this? Is this her fault or mine? / The tempter or the tempted, who sins most?' • critical responses to possible motivations for the exercise of willpower by the characters, e.g. Dowden: 'Isabella's saintliness (is) an active pursuit of holiness through exercise and discipline'. References to specific schools of thought and critics should be rewarded according to their relevance to candidates' arguments. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question Number	Indicative Content
3	*The Taming of the Shrew* Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: • possible definitions of happiness, e.g. in the society of the play, it is defined by heterosexual marriage in a way that modern audiences might find outmoded • significance of probable sources in oral and folk traditions where tales of subjugating shrewish behaviour to achieve happiness are common • use of the Induction to suggest that the narrative is a performance, blurring the line between illusion and reality and questioning the authenticity of happiness • diction and imagery highlighting the complexities of achieving happiness, e.g. Petruchio's use of puns and metaphors in his courtship underscores the idea that happiness can depend on one's perspective: 'She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house, / My household stuff, my field, my barn, / My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything' • repositioning of characters and events in different versions of the play to foreground alternative interpretations of happiness, e.g. in *10 Things I Hate About You* • critical interpretations which discuss the difficulty of the ending and whether it conforms to the comedy genre: 'the purpose of the comedies is to resolve social conflicts conclusively, though for ironic critics they may fail to do so' (Burt). References to specific schools of thought and critics should be rewarded according to their relevance to candidates' arguments. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question Number	Indicative Content
4	***The Taming of the Shrew*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: • use of the names Lucentio (connoting light) and Cambio (connoting change) and what they suggest about the character's charm • use of diction to characterise Lucentio, e.g. 'Tranio, I burn, I pine, I perish, Tranio, / If I achieve not this young modest girl.' • use of contrasts with other characters to develop the character of Lucentio, e.g. with Petruchio; Gremio; Tranio; Hortensio • the play as a form of classical romance, the role of Lucentio as a character archetype within that and the influence of the sources on his presentation, e.g. Ariosto's *I Suppositi* from which the subplot may be drawn • presentations of Lucentio in stage and film versions of the play, e.g. Zeffirelli's 1967 *Taming of the Shrew* where he is portrayed in a highly conventional manner • critical responses to the presentation of Lucentio, e.g. 'the Shrew's structure reinforces a series of moral distinctions between various kinds of play…Lucentio plays only in order to win Bianca.' (Burt). References to specific schools of thought and critics should be rewarded according to their relevance to candidates' arguments. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question Number	Indicative Content
5	***Hamlet*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: • Horatio's steadfast loyalty to Hamlet in a world filled with deceit and betrayal mirrors the broader political and social context of the play • diction and imagery presenting Horatio as consistently rational and stable, serving as a witness to the unfolding events, and often delivering crucial exposition, e.g. 'Before my God, I might not this believe / Without the sensible and true avouch / Of mine own eyes.' • use of Horatio as a foil to Hamlet's character, his pragmatism serving as a contrast to Hamlet's emotional turmoil – the duality enhances the play's exploration of complex human psychology • significance of sources, e.g. Saxo Grammaticus's *Gesta Danorum* in which Horatio may not have been as prominent; Shakespeare's adaptation elevates him to a more significant role • Horatio's contribution to the development of key themes of the play, e.g. loyalty; trust; honesty • critical responses to Horatio, e.g. 'he is a wandering ineptitude, who has never a single suggestion…And this is the strong silent man after whom Hamlet should have modelled himself!' (Kettle). References to specific schools of thought and critics should be rewarded according to their relevance to candidates' arguments. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question Number	Indicative Content
6	***Hamlet*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: • key moments in the narrative which present appearance and reality, e.g. the appearances of The Ghost; the play within the play • the relevance of contrasting contextual factors in influencing the theme of appearance and reality in the play, e.g. religious turmoil; peace and conflict arising from questions about the Elizabethan succession • diction and imagery used to present the idea of appearance and reality, e.g. 'this majestical roof fretted / with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to /me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours' • specific characters who prominently develop the theme, e.g. Hamlet; Claudius; Rosencrantz and Guildenstern • the influence of the sources of the play, e.g. *Amleth* in which the hero feigns idiocy in order to avoid the same fate as his father, who has been murdered by one of his sons • alternative interpretations focusing on appearance and reality, e.g. 'No one in this play knows or understands anyone else.' (Charnes). References to specific schools of thought and critics should be rewarded according to their relevance to candidates' arguments. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question Number	Indicative Content
7	***King Lear*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: • contemporary uncertainty about religion, monarchy and the succession and how these form a foundation for the presentation of truth in the play • diction and imagery used to present truth, e.g. 'Thy truth, then, be thy dower'; 'He cannot flatter, he. / An honest mind and plain, he must speak truth!' • specific characters used to present truth, e.g. The Fool: 'Truth's a dog must to kennel; he must be whipped out' • use of other devices to present truth, e.g. dramatic and verbal ironies evident in the division of Lear's kingdom; Lear's 'blindness' • sources which might have influenced Shakespeare's use of language and characterisation in the presentation of truth, e.g. *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* (Harsnett) and *The Essayes or Morall, Politike and Millitarie Discourses* (de Montaigne*)* • critical responses, e.g. 'The relationship between telling the truth, telling lies, and inventing fictions – the 'poesy' of Kent and Edgar – shapes the play's most important actions' (MacIntyre). References to specific schools of thought and critics should be rewarded according to their relevance to candidates' arguments. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question Number	Indicative Content
8	***King Lear*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: • contextual factors that might bear on the presentation of Lear, e.g. internal struggles and power dynamics in Renaissance Britain; concerns about the legitimacy of Queen Elizabeth's rule and the authority of James I • the significance of Shakespeare's revision of sources such as *King Leir*, making a tragedy out of what was originally comic, foregrounding the dark atmosphere and altering perceptions of Lear's character • key moments in the play which may influence our perception of Lear, e.g. his treatment of Cordelia; his casting out; the ending • use of diction, irony, foreshadowing and soliloquy to present Lear, e.g. 'I am a man more sinned against than sinning.' • film and stage versions of the play which re-interpret *King Lear* and present alternative versions of the leading character, e.g. *Ran*; *The Lears*; *A Thousand Acres* • critical responses, e.g. 'As Hazlitt said, final judgments about *King Lear*, its protagonists, or "its effect upon the mind" are "mere impertinence."' (Arnold). References to specific schools of thought and critics should be rewarded according to their relevance to candidates' arguments. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Section B: Pre-1900 Poetry

Question Number	Indicative Content
9	**Prescribed text: *Metaphysical Poetry,* editor Colin Burrow** An appropriate choice of poem to accompany *The Nymph Complaining for the Death of her Fawn* might be *A Valediction of Weeping* by John Donne. Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: • diction used to present mood and tone, e.g. 'wanton'; 'shot'; 'die' • imagery used to present mood and tone, e.g. 'Though they should wash their guilty hands / In this warm life-blood' • use of voice to create mood and tone, e.g. 'But oh, my fears!' • use of classical references to create mood and tone, e.g. 'Diana's shrine'; 'fair Elysium' • contextual factors relating to Marvell's creation of mood and tone, e.g. the possibility that it presents a clever ironic commentary, composed during the period in which he acted as a tutor to Mary Fairfax in an Anglican family and that the poem may be an expression of Catholic sympathies • alternative interpretations, e.g. 'Spoken by an innocent, but not entirely inexperienced young girl, the poem demonstrates Marvell's brilliant talent for female ventriloquism…(striking) new notes of excitement and candour' (Rumens). References to specific schools of thought and critics should be rewarded according to their relevance to candidates' arguments. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question Number	Indicative Content
10	**Prescribed text: *Metaphysical Poetry,* editor Colin Burrow** An appropriate choice of poem to accompany *'At the Round Earth's Imagined Corners'* might be *To My Excellent Lucasia, on Our Friendship* by Katherine Philips. Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: • diction used to present human nature, e.g. the concept of scepticism referenced in the title • imagery used to present human nature, e.g. 'Here on this lowly ground, / Teach me how to repent' • technical features such as the use of Petrarchan sonnet form with a patterned rhyme scheme and iambic metre to create the idea of inevitability in human affairs • contrast between the sermonizing of the octet and the more personal appeal of the sestet, used to focus a broader human concern with redemption into something very specific to the persona • context-specific readings, e.g. focusing on what it means to live with Christian faith; the significance of the references to the Book of Revelation • alternative interpretations, e.g. Gardiner's view that the Holy Sonnets are a sequence 'through which a movement towards spiritual assurance can be charted'; Grierson's argument that 'Each sonnet is a separate meditation or ejaculation,' (quoted in Stachniewski). References to specific schools of thought and critics should be rewarded according to their relevance to candidates' arguments. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question Number	Indicative Content
11	**Prescribed text: *English Romantic Verse,* editor David Wright** An appropriate choice of poem to accompany *Ode to the West Wind* might be *Songs of Experience: The Tyger* by William Blake. Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: • use of diction presenting the power of nature, e.g. 'aëry surge'; 'approaching storm' • use of imagery and symbolism presenting the power of nature, e.g. 'a vast sepulchre, / Vaulted with all thy congregated might / Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere / Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh, hear!' • other poetic techniques used to present the power of nature as dictated by seasonal patterns, e.g. regimented rhyme; consistent metre; regular versification • presentation of social concerns relating to the power of nature, divine providence, revolution and renewal, as occasioned by contemplation of the West wind, e.g. 'O Wind, / If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?' • analyses of the poem as possibly a response to contemporary events, e.g. the loss of the poet's son; the Peterloo Massacre; the role of nature during the Industrial Revolution • alternative interpretations focusing on Shelley's approach to creativity, change and nature, e.g. an eco-critical response focusing on nature as both destroyer and creator. References to specific schools of thought and critics should be rewarded according to their relevance to candidates' arguments. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question Number	Indicative Content
12	**Prescribed text: *English Romantic Verse,* editor David Wright** An appropriate choice of poem to accompany *On This Day I Complete My Thirty-Sixth Year* might be *Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey* by William Wordsworth. Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: • diction used to present powerful emotions, e.g. 'Still let me love!'; 'Awake, my Spirit!' • imagery used to present powerful emotions, e.g. 'the yellow leaf'; 'The worm – the canker' • other poetic techniques used to present powerful emotions, e.g. voice; contrast; rhetoric; versification • adaptation of classical reference to present powerful emotions, e.g. 'The Spartan, borne upon his shield / Was not more free.' • contextual factors affecting the production of the poem and the presentation of powerful emotions, e.g. Byron is supposedly renouncing the pleasures and distractions of his youth in favour of fighting in the Greek War of Independence • critical responses to Byron's expressions of emotion, e.g. that he was 'One of the most dramatic figures of a dramatic epoch' (Monroe). References to specific schools of thought and critics should be rewarded according to their relevance to candidates' arguments. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question Number	Indicative Content
13	**Prescribed text*: The New Oxford Book of Victorian Verse* edited by Christopher Ricks** An appropriate choice to accompany *from Maud: I.xi 'O let the solid ground'* might be *Meeting at Night* by Robert Browning. Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: • diction presenting hope, e.g. 'O let the solid ground / Not fail beneath my feet' • imagery and symbolism presenting hope, e.g. 'Let the sweet heavens endure / Not close and darken above me' • other poetic techniques presenting hope, e.g. voice and repetition • how other themes complement – and are complemented by – hope, e.g. the aim of hope can be seen as requited love and, at the conclusion of that, acceptance of whatever fate may then dictate • contextual factors that may have influenced the presentation of hope, e.g. relating to Tennyson's desire for Charlotte Rosa Baring, their supposedly serious affair and her parents' reported discouragement of it • critical interpretations, e.g. 'In 'Maud' (Tennyson) had intended the hope to triumph decisively over the doubt' (Kennedy). References to specific schools of thought and critics should be rewarded according to their relevance to candidates' arguments. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question Number	Indicative Content
14	**Prescribed text*: The New Oxford Book of Victorian Verse* edited by Christopher Ricks** An appropriate choice to accompany *Echo* might be *Love in a Life* by Robert Browning Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: • use of diction presenting love, e.g. 'Pulse for pulse, breath for breath' • use of images presenting love, e.g. 'souls brimfull of love'; 'thirsting longing eyes' • other poetic techniques used to present love, e.g. voice; rhetoric; imperative syntax • the structure of the poem used to present love, e.g. sextilla and the use of couplets at the end of each stanza • contextual details, e.g. the use of the myth of Echo and Narcissus to frame a poem about a spirit yearning to be reunited with a lost lover; the interest of Gabriel and William Rossetti in spiritualism and seances • critical interpretations, e.g. focusing on Rossetti's apparent attitude: 'Rigorous though Christina's denial of love was, it was not strong enough to curb all her womanly and human instincts. She fought against them and kept them in iron control, but, left alone with her genius, she could not from time to time prevent them from bursting into almost heart-rending poetry' (Bowra). References to specific schools of thought and critics should be rewarded according to their relevance to candidates' arguments. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Please refer to the specific marking guidance on when applying this marking grid.						
Level	Mark	AO1 = bullet point 1	AO2 = bullet point 2	AO3 = bullet points 3,4		AO5 = bullet points 5,6
	0	No rewardable material.				
1	1–5	**Descriptive** • Makes little reference to texts with limited organisation of ideas. Limited use of appropriate concepts and terminology with frequent errors and lapses of expression. • Uses a narrative or descriptive approach that shows limited knowledge of texts and how meanings are shaped in texts. Shows a lack of understanding of the writer's craft. • Shows limited awareness of contextual factors. • Shows limited awareness of links between texts and contexts. • Shows limited awareness of different interpretations and alternative readings of texts. • Limited linking of different interpretations to own response.				
2	6–10	**General understanding/exploration** • Makes general points, identifying some literary techniques with general explanation of effects. Aware of some appropriate concepts and terminology. Organises and expresses ideas with clarity, although still has errors and lapses. • Gives surface readings of texts relating to how meanings are shaped in texts. Shows general understanding by commenting on straightforward elements of the writer's craft. • Has general awareness of the significance and influence of contextual factors. • Makes general links between texts and contexts. • Offers straightforward explanations of different interpretations and alternative readings of texts. • Some support of own ideas given with reference to generic different interpretations.				
3	11–15	**Clear relevant application/exploration** • Offers a clear response using relevant textual examples. Relevant use of terminology and concepts. Creates a logical, clear structure with few errors and lapses in expression. • Demonstrates knowledge of how meanings are shaped in texts with consistent analysis. Shows clear understanding of the writer's craft. • Demonstrates a clear exploration of the significance and influence of contextual factors. • Develops relevant links between texts and contexts.				

		• Offers clear understanding of different interpretations and alternative readings of texts. • Explores different interpretations in support or contrast to own argument.
4	16–20	**Discriminating controlled application/exploration** • Constructs a controlled argument with fluently embedded examples. Discriminating use of concepts and terminology. Controls structures with precise cohesive transitions and carefully chosen language. • Demonstrates discriminating understanding of how meanings are shaped in texts. Analyses, in a controlled way, the nuances and subtleties of the writer's craft. • Provides a discriminating analysis of the significance and influence of contextual factors. • Makes detailed links between texts and contexts. • Produces a developed exploration of different interpretations and alternative readings of texts. • Discussion is controlled and offers integrated exploration of different interpretations in development of own critical position.
5	21–25	**Critical and evaluative** • Presents a critical evaluative argument with sustained textual examples. Evaluates the effects of literary features with sophisticated use of concepts and terminology. Uses sophisticated structure and expression. • Exhibits a critical evaluation of the ways meanings are shaped in texts. Displays a sophisticated understanding of the writer's craft. • Presents a sophisticated evaluation and appreciation of the significance and influence of contextual factors. • Makes sophisticated links between texts and contexts. • Applies a sustained evaluation of different interpretations and alternative readings of texts. • Evaluation is supported by sophisticated use of application of alternative interpretations to illuminate own critical position.

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