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# INTERNATIONAL AS ENGLISH LITERATURE

## Unit 1 Aspects of dramatic tragedy

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Thursday 30 April 2026

08:00 UK Time

Time allowed: 2 hours

### Materials

For this paper you must have:

- an OxfordAQA 12-page Answer Book.

### Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book.
- Do all rough work in your answer book. Cross through any work you do not want to be marked.
- You must answer **one** question from Section A and **one** question from Section B.
- Remember to include, in both your answers, relevant comments on the authors' dramatic methods in the set texts you are studying.

### Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 50.
- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- You will be marked on your ability to:
  - use good English
  - organise information clearly
  - analyse carefully the writers' methods
  - use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

## Section A: Elizabethan and Jacobean tragedy

Answer **one** question from this section.

Either

|   |   |
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| 0 | 1 |
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### William Shakespeare: *Othello*

Explore the significance of the aspects of dramatic tragedy in the following passage in relation to the play as a whole.

You should consider the following in your answer:

- the presentation of the different characters
- Shakespeare's use of dialogue
- the dramatic setting and action
- other relevant aspects of dramatic tragedy.

**[25 marks]**

### Act 3 Scene 4

#### EMILIA

Is not this man jealous?

#### DESDEMONA

I ne'er saw this before.

Sure, there's some wonder in this handkerchief;  
I am most unhappy in the loss of it.

#### EMILIA

'Tis not a year or two shows us a man:  
They are all but stomachs, and we all but food;  
They eat us hungerly, and when they are full  
They belch us.

*[Enter IAGO and CASSIO]*

Look you, Cassio and my husband.

#### IAGO

There is no other way; 'tis she must do't –  
And, lo, the happiness! Go, and importune her.

#### DESDEMONA

How now, good Cassio, what's the news with you?

**CASSIO**

Madam, my former suit: I do beseech you  
That, by your virtuous means, I may again  
Exist, and be a member of his love,  
Whom I, with all the office of my heart,  
Entirely honour. I would not be delayed:  
If my offence be of such mortal kind  
That nor my service past, nor present sorrows,  
Nor purposed merit in futurity  
Can ransom me into his love again –  
But to know so must be my benefit;  
So shall I clothe me in a forced content,  
And shut myself up in some other course  
To fortune's alms.

**DESDEMONA**

Alas, thrice-gentle Cassio,  
My advocacy is not now in tune:  
My lord is not my lord; nor should I know him,  
Were he in favour as in humour altered.  
So help me every spirit sanctified,  
As I have spoken for you all my best,  
And stood within the blank of his displeasure  
For my free speech! You must awhile be patient:  
What I can do, I will; and more I will  
Than for myself I dare. Let that suffice you.

**IAGO**

Is my lord angry?

**EMILIA**

He went hence but now,  
And certainly in strange unquietness.

**IAGO**

Can he be angry? I have seen the cannon  
When it hath blown his ranks into the air,  
And, like the devil, from his very arm  
Puffed his own brother – and is he angry?  
Something of moment then: I will go meet him,  
There's matter in't indeed, if he be angry.

**This extract continues on the next page**

**DESDEMONA**

I prithee do so.

*[Exit IAGO]*

Something sure of state –  
Either from Venice, or some unhatched practice  
Made demonstrable here in Cyprus to him –  
Hath puddled his clear spirit; and in such cases  
Men's natures wrangle with inferior things,  
Though great ones are their object. 'Tis even so;  
For let our finger ache, and it endues  
Our other, healthful members even to a sense  
Of pain. Nay, we must think men are not gods,  
Nor of them look for such observancy  
As fits the bridal. Beshrew me much, Emilia,  
I was – unhandsome warrior as I am –  
Arraigning his unkindness with my soul;  
But now I find I had suborned the witness,  
And he's indicted falsely.

**Turn over for the next question**

or

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| 0 | 2 |
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**William Shakespeare: *King Lear***

Explore the significance of the aspects of dramatic tragedy in the following passage in relation to the play as a whole.

You should consider the following in your answer:

- the presentation of Gloucester and Edgar
- Shakespeare's use of dialogue
- the dramatic setting
- other relevant aspects of dramatic tragedy.

**[25 marks]**

**Act 4 Scene 1**

*[Enter EDGAR as a Bedlam beggar]*

**EDGAR**

Yet better thus, and known to be contemned  
Than still contemned and flattered. To be worst,  
The low'st and most dejected thing of fortune,  
Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear.  
The lamentable change is from the best;  
The worst returns to laughter.

*[Enter the EARL OF GLOUCESTER led by an OLD MAN]*

Who's here?

My father, parti-eyed? World, world, O world,  
But that thy strange mutations make us hate thee,  
Life would not yield to age.

*[EDGAR stands aside]*

**OLD MAN** *[to GLOUCESTER]*

O my good lord,  
I have been your tenant and your father's tenant  
This fourscore years -

**GLOUCESTER**

Away, get thee away, good friend, be gone.  
Thy comforts can do me no good at all;  
Thee they may hurt.

**OLD MAN**

Alack, sir, you cannot see your way.

**GLOUCESTER**

I have no way and therefore want no eyes.  
I stumbled when I saw. Full oft 'tis seen  
Our means secure us, and our mere defects  
Prove our commodities. Ah dear son Edgar,  
The food of thy abused father's wrath -  
Might I but live to see thee in my touch  
I'd say I had eyes again.

**OLD MAN**

How now? Who's there?

**EDGAR** *[aside]*

O gods, who is't can say "I am at the worst"?  
I am worse than e'er I was.

**OLD MAN**

'Tis poor mad Tom.

**EDGAR** *[aside]*

And worse I may be yet. The worst is not  
So long as we can say "This is the worst."

**OLD MAN** *[to EDGAR]*

Fellow, where goest?

**GLOUCESTER**

Is it a beggar-man?

**OLD MAN**

Madman and beggar too.

**GLOUCESTER**

He has some reason, else he could not beg.  
In the last night's storm, I such a fellow saw,  
Which made me think a man a worm. My son  
Came then into my mind, and yet my mind  
Was then scarce friends with him. I have heard more since.  
As flies to wanton boys are we to th' gods;  
They kill us for their sport.

**EDGAR** *[aside]*

How should this be?

Bad is the trade that must play fool to sorrow,  
Ang'ring itself and others.

*[He comes forward]*

Bless thee, master.

**GLOUCESTER**

Is that the naked fellow?

**OLD MAN**

Ay, my lord.

**This extract continues on the next page**

**GLOUCESTER**

Then, prithee, get thee gone. If for my sake  
Thou wilt o'ertake us hence a mile or twain  
I' th' way toward Dover, do it for ancient love,  
And bring some covering for this naked soul,  
Which I'll entreat to lead me.

**OLD MAN**

Alack, sir, he is mad.

**GLOUCESTER**

'Tis the time's plague when madmen lead the blind.  
Do as I bid thee; or rather do thy pleasure.  
Above the rest, be gone.

**OLD MAN**

I'll bring him the best 'parel that I have,  
Come on't what will.  
*[Exit]*

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**Turn over for the next question**

or

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| 0 | 3 |
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**William Shakespeare: *Hamlet***

Explore the significance of the aspects of dramatic tragedy in the following passage in relation to the play as a whole.

You should consider the following in your answer:

- the presentation of Polonius, Claudius and Hamlet
- Shakespeare's use of dialogue
- the dramatic setting and action
- other relevant aspects of dramatic tragedy.

**[25 marks]**

**Act 3 Scene 1**

**POLONIUS**

Ophelia, walk you here. – Gracious, so please you,  
We will bestow ourselves. – Read on this book,  
That show of such an exercise may colour  
Your loneliness. We are oft to blame in this,  
'Tis too much proved, that with devotion's visage  
And pious action we do sugar o'er  
The devil himself.

**CLAUDIUS**

*[Aside]*

O, 'tis too true!  
How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!  
The harlot's cheek, beautied with plast'ring art,  
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it  
Than is my deed to my most painted word:  
O heavy burden.

**POLONIUS**

I hear him coming; let's withdraw, my lord.  
*[CLAUDIUS and POLONIUS hide behind the arras]*

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*[Enter HAMLET]*

**HAMLET**

To be, or not to be – that is the question:  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep –  
No more; and by a sleep to say we end  
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to – 'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wished: to die, to sleep.  
To sleep, perchance to dream. Ay, there's the rub;  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause. There's the respect  
That makes calamity of so long life.  
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,  
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
The pangs of disprized love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office, and the spurns  
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,  
When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin? Who would these fardels bear,  
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
But that the dread of something after death,  
The undiscovered country, from whose bourn  
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,  
And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
Than fly to others that we know not of?  
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;  
And thus the native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,  
And enterprises of great pith and moment  
With this regard their currents turn away,  
And lose the name of action. – Soft you now,  
The fair Ophelia. – Nymph, in thy orisons  
Be all my sins remembered.

**Turn over for the next question**

or

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 0 | 4 |
|---|---|

**Christopher Marlowe: *Doctor Faustus***

Explore the significance of the aspects of dramatic tragedy in the following passage in relation to the play as a whole.

You should consider the following in your answer:

- the presentation of Faustus and the Chorus
- Marlowe's use of dramatic language
- the dramatic setting and action
- other relevant aspects of dramatic tragedy.

**[25 marks]**

**Act 3 (Chorus)**

*[Enter the CHORUS]*

**CHORUS**

Learnèd Faustus,  
To find the secrets of astronomy  
Graven in the book of Jove's high firmament,  
Did mount him up to scale Olympus' top,  
Where, sitting in a chariot burning bright,  
Drawn by the strength of yoked dragons' necks,  
He views the clouds, the planets, and the stars,  
The tropics, zones, and quarters of the sky,  
From the bright circle of the hornèd moon  
Even to the height of *Primum Mobile*;  
And, whirling round with this circumference  
Within the concave compass of the pole,  
From east to west his dragons swiftly glide  
And in eight days did bring him home again.  
Not long he stayed within his quiet house  
To rest his bones after his weary toil,  
But new exploits do hale him out again,  
And, mounted then upon a dragon's back,  
That with his wings did part the subtle air,  
He now is gone to prove cosmography,  
That measures coasts and kingdoms of the earth,  
And, as I guess, will first arrive at Rome,  
To see the Pope and manner of his court  
And take some part of holy Peter's feast,  
The which this day is highly solemnised.

*[Exit]*

**Act 3 Scene 1**

*[Enter FAUSTUS and MEPHISTOPHELES]*

**FAUSTUS**

Having now, my good Mephistopheles,  
Passed with delight the stately town of Trier,  
Environed round with airy mountain-tops,  
With walls of flint and deep entrenched lakes,  
Not to be won by any conquering prince;  
From Paris next, coasting the realm of France,  
We saw the river Maine fall into Rhine,  
Whose banks are set with groves of fruitful vines.  
Then up to Naples, rich Campania,  
Whose buildings, fair and gorgeous to the eye,  
The streets straight forth and paved with finest brick.  
There saw we learnèd Maro's golden tomb,  
The way he cut an English mile in length  
Thorough a rock of stone in one night's space;  
From thence to Venice, Padua, and the east,  
In one of which a sumptuous temple stands  
That threatens the stars with her aspiring top,  
Whose frame is paved with sundry coloured stones,  
And roofed aloft with curious work in gold.  
Thus hitherto hath Faustus spent his time.  
But tell me now, what resting-place is this?  
Hast thou, as erst I did command,  
Conducted me within the walls of Rome?

**Turn over for the next question**

or

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 0 | 5 |
|---|---|

**John Webster: *The Duchess of Malfi***

Explore the significance of the aspects of dramatic tragedy in the following passage in relation to the play as a whole.

You should consider the following in your answer:

- the presentation of the Cardinal and Bosola
- Webster's use of dialogue
- the dramatic setting and action
- other relevant aspects of dramatic tragedy.

**[25 marks]**

**Act 5 Scene 2**

**CARDINAL**

I have honours in store for thee.

**BOSOLA**

There are a many ways that conduct to seeming Honour, and some of them very dirty ones.

**CARDINAL**

Throw to the devil  
Thy melancholy. The fire burns well,  
What need we keep a-stirring of't, and make  
A greater smother? Thou wilt kill Antonio?

**BOSOLA**

Yes.

**CARDINAL**

Take up that body.

**BOSOLA**

I think I shall  
Shortly grow the common bier for church-yards.

**CARDINAL**

I will allow thee some dozen of attendants  
To aid thee in the murder.

**BOSOLA**

O, by no means. Physicians that apply horse-leeches  
to any rank swelling use to cut off their tails, that the blood  
may run through them the faster. Let me have no train when I go  
to shed blood, lest it make me have a greater when I ride  
to the gallows.

**CARDINAL**

Come to me after midnight, to help to remove that body  
To her own lodging; I'll give out she died o' th' plague;  
'Twill breed the less inquiry after her death.

**BOSOLA**

Where's Castruccio, her husband?

**CARDINAL**

He's rode to Naples, to take possession  
Of Antonio's citadel.

**BOSOLA**

Believe me, you have done a very happy turn.

**CARDINAL**

Fail not to come. There is the master-key  
Of our lodgings; and by that you may conceive  
What trust I plant in you.

**BOSOLA**

You shall find me ready.

*[Exit CARDINAL]*

O poor Antonio, though nothing be so needful  
To thy estate as pity, yet I find  
Nothing so dangerous. I must look to my footing.  
In such slippery ice-pavements, men had need  
To be frost-nailed well: they may break their necks else.  
The precedent's here afore me: how this man  
Bears up in blood! seems fearless! Why, 'tis well:  
Security some men call the suburbs of hell,  
Only a dead wall between. Well, good Antonio,  
I'll seek thee out, and all my care shall be  
To put thee into safety from the reach  
Of these most cruel biters, that have got  
Some of thy blood already. It may be  
I'll join with thee in a most just revenge.  
The weakest arm is strong enough, that strikes  
With the sword of justice. Still methinks the Duchess  
Haunts me; there, there:  
'Tis nothing but my melancholy.  
O penitence, let me truly taste thy cup,  
That throws men down, only to raise them up.

*Exit [with the body]*

**Turn over for Section B**

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**Section B: Later dramatic tragedies**

Answer **one** question from this section.

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**Either**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 0 | 6 |
|---|---|

**Arthur Miller: *Death of a Salesman***

'In the tragedy of *Death of a Salesman*, a sense of restlessness and dissatisfaction affects all the characters.'

To what extent do you agree with this view of the way that the characters are presented in the play?

**[25 marks]**

**or**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 0 | 7 |
|---|---|

**Tennessee Williams: *A Streetcar Named Desire***

In *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Blanche, Stanley, Stella and Mitch may be regarded as the major characters.

To what extent do the other, minor, characters in the play have any real tragic and dramatic significance?

**[25 marks]**

**or**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 0 | 8 |
|---|---|

**Henrik Ibsen: *Hedda Gabler***

At the end of the play, Judge Brack says "But, good God! People don't do such things!"

To what extent can Hedda's suicide be seen as an event of real tragic significance rather than as slightly ridiculous and self-indulgent behaviour?

**[25 marks]**

**or**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 0 | 9 |
|---|---|

**Samuel Beckett: *Waiting for Godot***

'Ultimately, it is their refusal to give in that makes Vladimir and Estragon tragic heroes.'

To what extent do you agree with this view of the way that the two characters are presented?

**[25 marks]**

or

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | 0 |
|---|---|

**Brian Friel: *Translations***

'In *Translations*, women are presented as essentially passive figures, only on the margins of the tragic events.'

To what extent do you agree with this reading of the play?

**[25 marks]**

**END OF QUESTIONS**

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