

INTERNATIONAL AS ENGLISH LITERATURE LT01

Unit 1 Aspects of dramatic tragedy

Mark scheme

June 2026

Version: 1.0 Final

Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

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Information for Examiners

Welcome to this mark scheme which is designed to help you to deliver fair and accurate assessment. Please read carefully all sections and ensure that you follow the requirements that they contain.

Arriving at marks

- 1 All questions are framed to address all the Assessment Objectives (AOs). Answers are marked holistically and when deciding upon a mark in a band, examiners should bear in mind the equal weightings of the Assessment Objectives. Examiners need to read the whole answer, taking into account its strengths and weaknesses, and then place it in the appropriate band.
- 2 Examiners should avoid making early snap judgements before the whole answer has been read. Some candidates begin tentatively but go on to make relevant points.
- 3 Examiners should be prepared to use the full mark range and not ‘bunch’ scripts in the middle for safety. Top marks are attainable if candidates could not be expected to do more in the time and under the conditions in which they are working.
- 4 Examiners should mark positively. Although the mark scheme provides some indicators for what candidates are likely to write about, examiners should be willing to reward what is actually there – provided, of course, that it is relevant to the question being asked.
- 5 Examiners should remember that there are no right answers. Candidates’ views which are relevant, well-argued and supported by appropriate textual evidence must receive credit whether the examiner agrees with the views or not. It is important to try to remain flexible if a candidate introduces unusual or unorthodox ideas.
- 6 Examiners should remember that length and quality are not synonymous. Some brief answers may be relevant and concise. Equally, long answers may be diffuse and repetitive.
- 7 If answers are short or incomplete, examiners can reward only what is there and assess accordingly. Some further credit may be given to answers finished in note form.

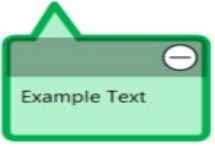
Using the mark bands

- 8 When placing answers in mark bands, examiners need to look closely at the descriptors and the detailed generic mark bands on pages 7–9. The key words for the bands are important and are printed below.

MARK BAND DESCRIPTORS	
Band 5	perceptive/assured
Band 4	coherent/thorough
Band 3	straightforward/relevant
Band 2	simple/generalised
Band 1	largely irrelevant, largely misunderstood, largely inaccurate

- 9 Answers placed at the top of the band will securely address the descriptors; answers at the lower end of the band will securely address the descriptors below and begin to show the qualities of the band into which you are placing them. Careful judgements need to be made about marks in the middle of the range; here it is likely that the key descriptors will be more intermittent but still clearly evident.
- 10 There will be occasions when an answer addresses descriptors in different bands; in such cases, the 'best-fit' model applies. Here examiners will need to exercise a different kind of judgement, looking to see where the answer can be most fairly and appropriately placed, in terms of its quality, against the descriptors.
- 11 Examiners must remember that the mark bands are not equivalent to grades: grades are decided by the awarding committee at the end of each session.

The following annotation is available for use on e-Marker 2:

Annotation Name	Toolbar Image	Details	Examples of Use on Script	Y/N
Annotation Type: Stamp				
Correct		Toolbar Tooltip: Correct		Y
Incorrect		Toolbar Tooltip: Incorrect		Y
Seen		Toolbar Tooltip: Seen		Y
Not Relevant		Toolbar Tooltip: Not Relevant		Y
Green Empty Comment		Toolbar Tooltip: Green Empty Comment No Default Text - text shown in screenshot was typed into annotation by user		Y
Repetition		Toolbar Tooltip: Repetition		Y
Lack Of Clarity		Toolbar Tooltip: Lack of Clarity		Y
Partially Made Point		Toolbar Tooltip: Partially made point		Y

The Assessment Objectives and their significance

- 12 All questions are framed to test AOs 1 and 2 so if candidates answer the question, then they will be addressing the AOs. In marking questions, however, examiners must also take account of AO3, which tests more than technical accuracy.

The equally weighted AOs are as follows:

AO1: Demonstrate understanding of the ways in which readers find meanings in texts, showing an understanding of genre, the significance of contexts, and the ways in which different interpretations can be found.

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts with close attention to authorial methods.

AO3: Express informed, personal and argued responses to literary texts, using appropriate concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate writing.

Mark scheme

It is important to remember that these students, in the main, are 17 years old so we are judging their skills half way through Key Stage 5.

	AO	Typical features	How to arrive at mark
Band 5 Perceptive/Assured 21–25 marks ‘Perception’ is demonstrated when students are showing the depth of their understanding and responding sensitively to the texts and task. ‘Assuredness’ is shown when students write with confidence and conviction.	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceptive understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task. Assuredness in the connection between contexts and genre, leading to perceptive interpretations. 	This band is characterised by perceptive and assured work which shows confidence, sharpness of mind and sophistication in relation to the task. At the top of the band students are consistently assured and will demonstrate sensitivity and perception across all three assessment objectives in the course of their response. At the bottom of the band there will be coherence and accuracy with some perception but with less consistency and evenness.
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceptive understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task. Assured engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used. 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceptive, assured and sophisticated argument in relation to the task. Assured use of literary critical concepts and terminology; mature and impressive expression. 	
Band 4 Coherent/Thorough 16–20 marks ‘Coherence’ is shown when students are logical and consistent in their arguments in relation to the task. They hold their ideas together in an intelligible way. ‘Thoroughness’ is shown when students write carefully and precisely with detail.	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thorough understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task. Coherence in the connection between contexts and genre, leading to carefully explained interpretations. 	This band is characterised by coherent and thorough work where ideas are linked together in a focused and purposeful way in relation to the task. At the top of the band students will demonstrate a fully coherent and thorough argument across all three assessment objectives in the course of their response. At the bottom of the band ideas will be discussed in a shaped, relevant and purposeful way with a clear sense of direction, with one or two lapses in coherence and accuracy.
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thorough understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task. Thorough engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used. 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical, thorough and coherent argument in relation to the task where ideas are debated in depth. Appropriate use of literary critical concepts and terminology; precise and accurate expression. 	

<p>Band 3 Straightforward/ Relevant 11–15 marks</p> <p>‘Straightforward’ work is shown when students make their ideas in relation to the task clearly known.</p> <p>‘Relevant’ work is shown when students are focused on the task and use detail in an appropriate and supportive way.</p>	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Straightforward understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task. • Relevant in the connection between contexts and genre, leading to straightforward interpretations. 	<p>This band is characterised by straightforward and relevant work where the student’s response to the task is clear and intelligible.</p> <p>At the top of the band students will demonstrate consistent straightforward understanding in the course of their argument. Ideas will be developed relevantly.</p> <p>At the bottom of the band there will be flashes of relevant understanding with evidence of straightforward thinking.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Straightforward understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task. • Relevant engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used. 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensibly ordered ideas in a relevant argument in relation to the task. • Some use of literary critical concepts and terminology which are mainly appropriate; straightforward and clear expression. 	
<p>Band 2 Simple/Generalised 6–10 marks</p> <p>‘Simple’ work is shown when students write in an unelaborated and basic way in relation to the task.</p> <p>‘Generalised’ work is shown when students write without regard to particular details.</p>	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task. • Generalised in the connections between contexts and genre, leading to simple interpretations. 	<p>This band is characterised by simple and generalised work which is mainly linked to the task.</p> <p>At the top of the band students will demonstrate a basic generalised understanding in the course of their answer. Ideas will be developed in a simple way.</p> <p>At the bottom of the band there will be inconsistency, but the beginnings of a simple and generalised understanding.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task. • Generalised engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used. 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A simple structure to the argument which may not be consistent but which does relate to the task. • Generalised use of literary critical concepts and terminology; simple expression. 	

<p>Band 1 Largely irrelevant/largely misunderstood/largely inaccurate 1–5 marks</p> <p>‘Largely irrelevant’ work is shown when students write in an unclear way with only occasional reference to what is required by the question.</p> <p>‘Largely misunderstood’ and ‘largely inaccurate’ work is shown when knowledge of the text is insecure, hazy and often wrong.</p>	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little sense of the AOs in relation to the task; little sense of how meanings are shaped; little sense of any relevant contexts, genre or interpretations. 	<p>This band is characterised by work which is largely irrelevant and largely misunderstood and largely inaccurate, and so unlikely to be addressing the AOs in a relevant way.</p> <p>At the top of the band students will mention some unconnected points in relation to the task during the course of their writing. The writing is likely to lack clarity.</p> <p>At the bottom of the band there will be no connection with the task; the writing will be hard to follow and irrelevant.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing is likely to be unclear and incorrect; if it is accurate the content will be irrelevant. 	
	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some vague points in relation to the task and some ideas about task and text(s). 	
0 marks		No marks for response when nothing is written or where response has no connection to the text(s) or task.	

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]

Some possible content is given below. It suggests some of the ways the Assessment Objectives might be addressed, but as 'significance' relates to contextual, structural, linguistic and interpretative issues some strands listed could easily address more than one AO.

Examiners must also remember that because students have read and studied *Othello* through the lens of **tragedy**, the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

AO1: Demonstrate understanding of the ways in which readers find meanings in texts, showing an understanding of genre, the significance of contexts, and the ways in which different interpretations can be found.

Focus might be on:

- elements of domestic tragedy
- male-female relationships
- the emphasis on key social roles: eg wife, husband, servant
- the dramatic and tragic role of Emilia
- Desdemona as tragic victim
- the world of public affairs in which Othello and Cassio operate
- knowledge and self-knowledge; guilt and innocence
- Iago as Machiavellian and tragic villain.

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts with close attention to authorial methods.

Focus might be on:

- the relationship of this extract to earlier parts of this scene
- the dramatic significance of the handkerchief
- dramatic ironies
- stage entrances and exits
- the comparative formality of Cassio's speech
- Iago's orchestrating the action
- martial imagery
- the place of Desdemona's speeches within the passage.

Given that this is a **closed book** exam, references to other parts of the play may be more generalised than those from the passage.

AO3: Express informed, personal and argued responses to literary texts, using appropriate concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate writing.

With respect to skill in writing:

- quality of argument, here related to significance of aspects of tragedy
- organisation of ideas
- use of concepts and terminology appropriate to the question
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid interpretation and any valid discussion of dramatic method.

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]

Some possible content is given below. It suggests some of the ways the Assessment Objectives might be addressed, but as 'significance' relates to contextual, structural, linguistic and interpretative issues some strands listed could easily address more than one AO.

Examiners must also remember that because students have read and studied *King Lear* through the lens of **tragedy**, the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

AO1: Demonstrate understanding of the ways in which readers find meanings in texts, showing an understanding of genre, the significance of contexts, and the ways in which different interpretations can be found.

Focus might be on:

- Edgar's philosophic musings
- ideas about blindness and 'seeing'
- the tragic concepts of suffering, mortality and fate
- the tragic and dramatic functions of the old man: eg his representation of loyalty in the face of danger; the ways he directs the attention of the audience
- learning, knowledge and self-knowledge
- disguise/deception, trust/loyalty
- what being 'human' involves
- Gloucester's bitter fatalism, especially regarding the gods.

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts with close attention to authorial methods.

Focus might be on:

- the place of the passage within the wider structure of the play: the movement towards Dover
- tragic and dramatic parallels between Lear and Gloucester: eg their growing sense of the needs of others
- imagery relating to eyes and sight
- the significance of Edgar's reference to 'the worst'
- proverbial speeches
- Edgar's role-switching
- dramatic antitheses: sight/blindness, appearance/reality, reason/madness
- movement on stage.

Given that this is a **closed book** exam, references to other parts of the play may be more generalised than those from the passage.

AO3: Express informed, personal and argued responses to literary texts, using appropriate concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate writing.

With respect to skill in writing:

- quality of argument, here related to significance of aspects of tragedy
- organisation of ideas
- use of concepts and terminology appropriate to the question
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid interpretation and any valid discussion of dramatic method.

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]

Some possible content is given below. It suggests some of the ways the Assessment Objectives might be addressed, but as 'significance' relates to contextual, structural, linguistic and interpretative issues some strands listed could easily address more than one AO.

Examiners must also remember that because students have read and studied *Hamlet* through the lens of **tragedy**, the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

AO1: Demonstrate understanding of the ways in which readers find meanings in texts, showing an understanding of genre, the significance of contexts, and the ways in which different interpretations can be found.

Focus might be on:

- Polonius as a director of operations
- guilt, deceit, plotting
- aspects of appearance and reality
- Claudius as a tragic villain
- ideas about life and death
- corruption within the public world
- the degree to which characters are presented as being in control of their own fate
- Hamlet's philosophical reflections.

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts with close attention to authorial methods.

Focus might be on:

- what precedes the passage: Polonius, Claudius and Gertrude all being to different degrees complicit in plotting and spying
- proverbial expressions
- the complex nature of Hamlet's thoughts, abstract ideas
- references to life, sleep and death
- the patterns and structure of his soliloquy
- religious lexis: references to devotion and conscience
- questions and answers
- the ways in which Ophelia is manipulated.

Given that this is a **closed book** exam, references to other parts of the play may be more generalised than those from the passage.

AO3: Express informed, personal and argued responses to literary texts, using appropriate concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate writing.

With respect to skill in writing:

- quality of argument, here related to significance of aspects of tragedy
- organisation of ideas
- use of concepts and terminology appropriate to the question
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid interpretation and any valid discussion of dramatic method.

0	4
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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]

Some possible content is given below. It suggests some of the ways the Assessment Objectives might be addressed, but as 'significance' relates to contextual, structural, linguistic and interpretative issues some strands listed could easily address more than one AO.

Examiners must also remember that because students have read and studied *Doctor Faustus* through the lens of **tragedy**, the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

AO1: Demonstrate understanding of the ways in which readers find meanings in texts, showing an understanding of genre, the significance of contexts, and the ways in which different interpretations can be found.

Focus might be on:

- the degree to which Faustus is presented as a heroic, epic figure
- the references to the wider universe of the heavens and planets
- Faustus' speech picking up some of the ideas of the Chorus about his journey and its geographic range
- geopolitical references helping to establish Faustus' eminence
- the sense of superhuman exploits, the exercise of power
- hubris: the illusion of Faustus' power and his ability to 'command' Mephistopheles
- aspects of the morality play – seven deadly sins.

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts with close attention to authorial methods.

Focus might be on:

- the pattern of the appearances of the Chorus within the play
- the dramatic function of the Chorus in presenting a view of Faustus
- heroic, epic imagery: eg 'Jove', 'Olympus', 'dragons'
- the sense of urgency and the passage of time in the speech of the Chorus: eg 'again', 'now'
- Faustus' use of superlatives
- his self-regarding use of the third person when referring to himself
- the ways his speech moves from narration of the recent past to the present action.

Given that this is a **closed book** exam, references to other parts of the play may be more generalised than those from the passage.

AO3: Express informed, personal and argued responses to literary texts, using appropriate concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate writing.

With respect to skill in writing:

- quality of argument, here related to significance of aspects of tragedy
- organisation of ideas
- use of concepts and terminology appropriate to the question
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid interpretation and any valid discussion of dramatic method.

0	5
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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]

Some possible content is given below. It suggests some of the ways the Assessment Objectives might be addressed, but as 'significance' relates to contextual, structural, linguistic and interpretative issues many strands listed could easily address more than one AO.

Examiners must also remember that because students have read and studied *The Duchess of Malfi* through the lens of **tragedy**, the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

AO1: Demonstrate understanding of the ways in which readers find meanings in texts, showing an understanding of genre, the significance of contexts, and the ways in which different interpretations can be found.

Focus might be on:

- Bosola as malcontent and machiavel, but perhaps also as a corrupted tragic hero
- his bitter, melancholic worldly knowledge and self-knowledge
- the corruption of the court: parasitic and opportunistic
- distrust, suspicion and danger: 'I must look to my footing'
- pity and terror
- women as tragic victims
- revenge and justice
- the degree to which humans are portrayed as playthings of fate.

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts with close attention to authorial methods.

Focus might be on:

- the preceding action – Julia's death
- the world of death and darkness: 'after midnight', 'plague', 'churchyards'
- rapid interchange of dialogue, question and answer
- the Cardinal's terse replies and commands
- medicinal and religious imagery
- proverbial expressions
- Bosola's final soliloquy: the sense of a conflicted mind and hints about future action
- the structure of the passage.

Given that this is a **closed book** exam, references to other parts of the play may be more generalised than those from the passage.

AO3: Express informed, personal and argued responses to literary texts, using appropriate concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate writing.

With respect to skill in writing:

- quality of argument, here related to significance of aspects of tragedy
- organisation of ideas
- use of concepts and terminology appropriate to the question
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid interpretation and any valid discussion of dramatic method.

0	6
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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]

Some possible content is given below. It suggests some of the ways the Assessment Objectives might be addressed, but some strands listed could easily address more than one AO.

Examiners must also remember that because students have read and studied *Death of a Salesman* through the lens of **tragedy**, the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

AO1: Demonstrate understanding of the ways in which readers find meanings in texts, showing an understanding of genre, the significance of contexts, and the ways in which different interpretations can be found.

Focus might be on:

- Willy: his precarious employment, his urge to emulate others: ‘turbulent longings’
- the nature of the American Dream – seemingly always out of reach
- the life of a salesman on the road: ‘got to dream’
- Biff: sense of a purposeless life, never moved on from the successes of his youth: ‘all the wrong dreams’
- Happy: perhaps deluded and blindly optimistic
- Linda: stoical and supportive, generally positive outlook
- the other characters to whom Willy might be compared in this context: Howard, Charley, Bernard
- the tragic idea of over-reaching.

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts with close attention to authorial methods.

Focus might be on:

- the seductive images of the past
- Willy’s soliloquies
- the structure of the play: fragmented time, flashbacks, sharp cuts – an inability to settle in the present
- the intimidating setting, but also the ‘air of the dream’
- the symbolism of worldly goods (fridge, car) breaking down
- effect of non-verbal dramatic effects: eg the flute, the raucous music at the restaurant, lighting
- self-conscious masculinity
- the structural movement of the play, perhaps towards a final anagnorisis, acceptance.

Given that this is a **closed book** exam, references to the play may be generalised as well as specific.

AO3: Express informed, personal and argued responses to literary texts, using appropriate concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate writing.

With respect to skill in writing:

- quality of argument, here related to significance of aspects of tragedy
- organisation of ideas
- use of concepts and terminology appropriate to the question
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid interpretation and any valid discussion of dramatic method.

0	7
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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]

Some possible content is given below. It suggests some of the ways the Assessment Objectives might be addressed, but some strands listed could easily address more than one AO.

Examiners must also remember that because students have read and studied *A Streetcar Named Desire* through the lens of **tragedy**, the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

AO1: Demonstrate understanding of the ways in which readers find meanings in texts, showing an understanding of genre, the significance of contexts, and the ways in which different interpretations can be found.

Focus might be on:

- the general sense in which they represent aspects of the life of the Quarter
- aspects of race and gender
- Blanche's dead boy and Mitch's lost girl: elegiac effect and impact on the main characters
- Eunice: contrast with Blanche, reflects (with Steve) elements of the Stanley-Stella relationship.
- her advice: grimly realistic, lacking in illusions
- the Doctor and Matron: to a degree representing unfeeling institutions; messengers of a sort of death
- the young man, the Mexican woman, the unnamed black woman: aspect of desire and death.

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts with close attention to authorial methods.

Focus might be on:

- aspects of plastic theatre: music, sound, blue piano, street cries reflecting character, mood and culture
- reflecting elements of the main characters – minor key
- the poker night scene, the card game in Scene 11. Supporting roles of Steve and Pablo
- the degree to which they are individualised, given distinctive voices
- the pattern of their appearances in the structure of the play. Steve speaking the last line
- their possibly choric function
- their place within the setting: the apartment and the street, heard off-stage and fill the on-stage space.

Given that this is a **closed book** exam, references to the play may be generalised as well as specific.

AO3: Express informed, personal and argued responses to literary texts, using appropriate concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate writing.

With respect to skill in writing:

- quality of argument, here related to significance of aspects of tragedy
- organisation of ideas
- use of concepts and terminology appropriate to the question
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid interpretation and any valid discussion of dramatic method.

0	8
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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]

Some possible content is given below. It suggests some of the ways the Assessment Objectives might be addressed, but some strands listed could easily address more than one AO.

Examiners must also remember that because students have read and studied *Hedda Gabler* through the lens of **tragedy**, the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

AO1: Demonstrate understanding of the ways in which readers find meanings in texts, showing an understanding of genre, the significance of contexts, and the ways in which different interpretations can be found.

Focus might be on:

- the wider structural and dramatic significance of her suicide – what it says about the society in which she lives
- a comparison with other deaths. Her comments on Loevborg: ‘there’s beauty in what he has done’
- the significance of the death of her unborn child
- the degree to which reality increasingly confronts her fantasies
- whether, as a woman who seeks masculine experience, she is sacrificed to the needs of a male-dominated society
- pity and fear. The degree to which Hedda gains self-knowledge or simply evades responsibility
- her tendency to self-dramatise.

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts with close attention to authorial methods.

Focus might be on:

- the key role of Brack: given the final lines
- the claustrophobic effect of the stage setting
- the culmination of a sense of tragic inevitability – a trap closing
- the effect of the preceding action: ‘frenzied dance melody’
- effect of dramatic symbols such as the pistols
- doors and windows perhaps representing the possibility of escape, but finally closed
- the smell of flowers being described as the odour of death
- the shape of the final scene: the noose gradually tightening, Brack’s power, Tesman and Mrs Elvsted moving away from her.

Given that this is a **closed book** exam, references to the play may be generalised as well as specific.

AO3: Express informed, personal and argued responses to literary texts, using appropriate concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate writing.

With respect to skill in writing:

- quality of argument, here related to significance of aspects of tragedy
- organisation of ideas
- use of concepts and terminology appropriate to the question
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid interpretation and any valid discussion of dramatic method.

0	9
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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]

Some possible content is given below. It suggests some of the ways the Assessment Objectives might be addressed, but some strands listed could easily address more than one AO.

Examiners must also remember that because students have read and studied *Waiting for Godot* through the lens of **tragedy**, the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

AO1: Demonstrate understanding of the ways in which readers find meanings in texts, showing an understanding of genre, the significance of contexts, and the ways in which different interpretations can be found.

Focus might be on:

- Godot’s repeated failure to arrive, but their holding on to hope: ‘unless Godot arrives’
- possible connections with the French Resistance in World War II
- the traditional ability of tragic heroes to confront death
- their physical resilience in the face of possible tragedy: the characters’ determination to go on, their expressions of optimism
- an alternative view that their helplessness and vulnerability means that they do not appear heroic
- alternative views of what makes them tragic heroes
- the constant defeat of expectations and the dashing of hopes
- glimpses of Christian faith (the two thieves).

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts with close attention to authorial methods.

Focus might be on:

- the effect of the structure of the play; echoes, repetitions, parallels
- the relationship of the two acts. ‘Next day. Same Time. Same Place’
- the dramatic and tragic effect of the bare stage setting: comfortless, trapped on stage
- physical demonstrations of frustration
- their verbal jousting, their use of games to pass the time
- the refrain: ‘We’re waiting for Godot’
- the contrast between the two characters: their responses to adversity are not identical
- dramatic effect of the final moments of the play: ‘they do not move’.

Given that this is a **closed book** exam, references to the play may be generalised as well as specific.

AO3: Express informed, personal and argued responses to literary texts, using appropriate concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate writing.

With respect to skill in writing:

- quality of argument, here related to significance of aspects of tragedy
- organisation of ideas
- use of concepts and terminology appropriate to the question
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid interpretation and any valid discussion of dramatic method.

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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]

Some possible content is given below. It suggests some of the ways the Assessment Objectives might be addressed, but some strands listed could easily address more than one AO.

Examiners must also remember that because students have read and studied *Translations* through the lens of **tragedy**, the AOs must necessarily be connected to that genre through the task.

AO1: Demonstrate understanding of the ways in which readers find meanings in texts, showing an understanding of genre, the significance of contexts, and the ways in which different interpretations can be found.

Focus might be on:

- a comparison with the male characters – more obviously and regularly active
- a counter-argument that they connect significantly to some central themes of the play: identity, love and language
- Maire’s complex interaction with a range of characters
- her central role in the narrative
- her assertive ‘strong-minded’ character, arguably not weak or ‘passive’. Significantly, she wishes to learn English
- Bridget’s passing on important information; represents features of the local community
- Jimmy Jack’s comic obsession with the goddess Athene providing a different sort of love story.

AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts with close attention to authorial methods.

Focus might be on:

- the symbolism of Sarah’s loss of speech. She becomes ‘more waif-like than ever’. A victim who ironically exposes Maire’s love affair
- the wider tragic and dramatic significance of Sarah’s language loss
- perhaps the structural significance of the birth of Nellie Ruadh’s baby in Act 1 and its death in Act 3.
- the way the potentially comic trajectory of the love story of Maire and Yolland (ending in marriage?) is fractured and becomes tragic
- Maire’s tragically ironic description of the English soldiers: ‘I don’t know a word they’re saying, nor they me; but sure that doesn’t matter, does it?’
- For Yolland, Maire in some ways represents Ireland
- the central wooing scene and the attempt to ‘translate’ feelings.

Given that this is a **closed book** exam, references to the play may be generalised as well as specific.

AO3: Express informed, personal and argued responses to literary texts, using appropriate concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate writing.

With respect to skill in writing:

- quality of argument, here related to significance of aspects of tragedy
- organisation of ideas
- use of concepts and terminology appropriate to the question
- technical accuracy.

Accept any valid interpretation and any valid discussion of dramatic method.