Pearson

Mark Scheme (Results)

Summer 2026

Pearson Edexcel Level 3 GCE

English Literature

Advanced Subsidiary (8ET0)

Paper 1: Poetry and Drama

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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

The marking grids have been designed to assess student work holistically. The grids identify which Assessment Objective is being targeted by each bullet point within the level descriptors. One bullet point is linked to one Assessment Objective; however, please note that the number of bullet points in the level descriptor does not directly correlate to the number of marks in the level descriptor.

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

- 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 each of the Assessment Objectives described in the 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
- examiners of Advanced GCE English should remember that all Assessment Objectives within a level are equally weighted. They must consider this when making their judgements
- the mark grid identifies which Assessment Objective is being targeted by each bullet point within the level descriptors
- 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.

Paper 1 Mark scheme

Question number	Indicative content
1	Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: ● comparisons of the ways the narrator or speaker expresses feelings about different facets of culture, either via artefacts or customs and ideas, e.g. a sense of divisiveness; the pointlessness of cultural snobbery ● ways in which the poets use language to present images of culture, e.g. use of slang vocabulary to describe the working-class teenagers ● ways in which cultural values can transform over time and the conflict between modern and traditional ideas of culture, e.g. the changing perceptions of the urn's depictions: 'millennia hence…' ● comparisons of imagery in the two poems, e.g. symbolic use of the vase in the named poem ● contrasts in cultures, e.g. juxtaposition of perceived 'low' culture with perceived 'high' culture ● use of form and structure to present culture, e.g. the mirroring of the structure and content of Keats' ode as a parody. These are suggestions only. Reward any appropriate poem selection and relevant comparisons.
2	Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: ● comparisons of the imagery in the two poems, e.g. references to blood and pain in the named poem ● comparisons of the voices of the two poems, e.g. use of third person to create a detached tone in the named poem, highlighting the horror of the mothers' experiences ● comparison of ways in which mothers relate to their children, e.g. the juxtaposition of the suffering and the selflessness of the biological mother in the named poem ● comparison of ways in which the speaker or narrator expresses feelings towards a mother, e.g. references to rubbish in named poem ● ways in which cultural expectations of motherhood shape its role ● use of form and structure to present motherhood, e.g. the contrast of the loss of the biological mother and the joy of the adoptive mother; the cyclical structure of the poem beginning and ending in India. These are suggestions only. Reward any appropriate poem selection and relevant comparisons.

Please refer to Specific Marking Guidance when applying this marking grid.		
AO1 = bullet point 1	**AO2 = bullet point 2**	**AO4 = bullet point 3**

Level	Mark	Descriptor (AO1, AO2, AO4)
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–4	**Recalls information/descriptive** • Recalls basic points with few accurate references to texts. Recalls limited concepts and terms. Ideas are unstructured with frequent errors and technical lapses. • Uses a highly narrative or descriptive approach. Shows overall lack of understanding of how meanings are shaped in texts and the writer's craft. • Has limited awareness of connections between texts. Describes the texts separately.
Level 2	5–9	**General understanding/approach** • Makes general points and references texts, though not always securely. Gives general explanation of concepts and terminology. Ideas are organised but writing has errors and technical lapses. • Gives surface readings of texts by commenting on straightforward elements. Shows general understanding of how meanings are shaped in texts and the writer's craft. • Gives general connections between texts. Provides straightforward examples.
Level 3	10–14	**Clear understanding/exploration** • Offers a clear response, providing examples. Accurate use of concepts and terminology. Ideas are expressed with few errors and lapses in expression. • Demonstrates clear approach to how meanings are shaped in texts. Has clear knowledge which shows understanding of the writer's craft. • Makes clear connections between texts. Supports with clear examples.
Level 4	15–19	**Consistent application/exploration** • Constructs a consistent argument with examples, confident structure and precise transitions. Uses appropriate concepts and terminology. Expression is secure with carefully chosen language. • Displays a secure understanding of how meanings are shaped in texts. Provides evidence of effective and consistent understanding of the writer's craft. • Makes connections between texts. Uses consistently appropriate examples.
Level 5	20–24	**Discriminating application/exploration** • Provides a consistently effective argument with textual examples. Applies a discriminating range of concepts and terminology. Secure expression with carefully chosen language and sophisticated transitions. • Displays discrimination when evaluating how meanings are shaped in texts. Shows a critical understanding of the writer's craft. • Makes effective connections between texts. Exhibits discriminating use of examples.

Question number	Indicative content
3	***Les Blancs*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: ● dramatic use of tensions between Tshembe's experiences and family in Europe, and loyalty to his African traditions and family, e.g. the conversations with his brothers; the dramatic presentation of conflict between Tshembe and Abioseh ● references to Tshembe's African cultural identity established in the play's exposition, e.g. the funeral robes and 'lizard powder' ● the dramatic presentation of Tshembe as a symbol of resistance against white colonial oppression ● Hansberry's use of symbolic motifs linked with his character, e.g. the ceremonial dance signifying the heritage he wishes to protect ● Tshembe's interactions with, and tensions between, the colonisers, e.g. dramatic use of dialogue with Major Rice, Charlie Morris: 'the conscience, such as it is, of imperialism is ... irrelevant.' ● Hansberry's use of Tshembe as a mouthpiece to convey intolerance of the injustices brought about by Western colonisation, e.g. 'I have seen them die!' These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.
4	***Les Blancs*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: ● dramatic presentation of the impact of oppression, e.g. Tshembe's dialogue and the conflict of being torn between two worlds ● dramatic use of characters who demonstrate different responses to oppression, e.g. Eric; Peter; Abioseh ● Hansberry's use of symbolism, e.g. The Woman; the drummers; encroachment on the 'bush' representing the disruption of oppression to the natural order ● dramatic presentation of a range of oppressions, e.g. racial; economic; cultural; violent ● candidates may argue against the statement, e.g. the focus at the end on the aftermath of violence and oppression ● Hansberry's reflection of the contexts of colonialism in Africa, e.g. the exploitation of natural resources; violence of armed struggles for independence; imposition of Western ideologies. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question number	Indicative content
5	***Doctor Faustus*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: ● Faustus' pact with Mephistopheles marking the beginning of his quest for power, and the allure of that power ● Marlowe's dramatic presentation of the ephemeral nature of power and its ability to deceive and corrupt, e.g. Faustus' power as based on illusion and deception, and its use for trickery and triviality, such as his dealings with the Horse-courser ● dramatic use of symbolism, e.g. the use of the clock as a metaphor for Faustus' dwindling time and the transitory nature of power ● Marlowe's use of Wagner and the presentation of the Seven Deadly Sins to ridicule Faustus' aspirations to power ● Faustus's pursuit of power as reflective of Renaissance interest in the search for knowledge and power through the study of magic and science ● Marlowe's use of satire to ridicule established authority, e.g. Faustus' slapstick boxing of the Pope's ears. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.
6	***Doctor Faustus*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: ● the presentation of interactions with the Good and Evil Angels as representative of Faustus' moral struggle, his alignment with the Evil Angel suggesting his resistance to redemption ● the use of Faustus' dialogue and his consideration of redemption to reveal his hubris and excessive pride, and to drive dramatic tension ● Marlowe's foreshadowing of Faustus' damnation, signposting him as beyond redemption, e.g. the congealing of his blood; 'Homo fuge' appearing on his arm ● dramatic presentation of Mephistopheles' repeated advice to repent and Faustus' refusal to do so; and this as contributing to the tragic inevitability of his damnation ● Marlowe's treatment of the theological context of the play, e.g. the tone of irredeemable fate; Faustus' decision to make the pact as a deliberate rejection of redemption ● the dramatic use of the Chorus to provide commentary on contemporary societal expectations and beliefs regarding redemption. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question number	Indicative content
7	***The Duchess of Malfi*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: ● Webster's dramatic presentation of the sinful abuses of power, e.g. Ferdinand's tyrannical behaviour ● imagery of sin emphasising the moral decay in the play, e.g. the Cardinal's 'handful of corruption'; imagery of the bloodstained Bible ● Webster's dramatic use of soliloquies and monologues as giving insight into the complexities of sin, e.g. Bosola's soliloquies ● Webster's dramatic inclusion of supernatural elements emphasising the consequences of sin and heightening the tragic atmosphere, e.g. Ferdinand's hallucination of horses ● Webster's use of contrast to highlight sinful behaviour, e.g. the Duchess' morality; Antonio's admiration of the French court's lack of corruption ● the play's reflection of contemporary religious turmoil as shown in its exploration of sin and morality. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.
8	***The Duchess of Malfi*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: ● the use of dramatic irony, e.g. the Duchess' secret marriage to Antonio, underscoring her challenge to norms of social hierarchy ● Webster's dramatic use of monologues to challenge contemporary ideas about the immorality of the lower class, e.g. Bosola's soliloquies ● the character of the Duchess and her rebellion against social expectations, emphasised through imagery, e.g. the wedding ring ● Webster's structural choices which serve to highlight challenges to conventions and expectations, e.g. role reversals between Antonio and the Duchess ● symbolic representation of hierarchy through the physical settings, e.g. the Duchess' chambers and the court ● Webster's defiance of Jacobean societal conventions in the play's resolution. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question number	Indicative content
9	***The Importance of Being Earnest*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: ● Wilde's satirising of the hypocrisy of mannered Victorian society and the facade of maintaining appearances, e.g. Jack and Algernon adopting false identities ● the comic exaggeration of manners through satirical language, epigrams, and witty dialogue, e.g. 'The truth is rarely pure and never simple' ● Wilde's mocking presentation of the highly mannered courtship rituals and strict etiquette, e.g. Gwendolen and Cecily's fixation on the name 'Earnest'; hasty engagements ● Wilde's ridicule of social-class hypocrisy through characterisation, e.g. Lady Bracknell as symbolic of upper-class snobbery ● Wilde's undermining of marriage as a social institution and way of securing status, e.g. through the hypocrisy inherent in Lady Bracknell's interrogations ● Wilde's use of the conventions of the Comedy of Manners, e.g. through farce, and the trivialities focussed on in the play's resolution. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.
10	***The Importance of Being Earnest*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: ● the presentation of Algernon as symbolising the selfish pursuit of a hedonistic lifestyle, e.g. his greed when consuming all the cucumber sandwiches; food as a symbol of self-indulgence ● reflection of the Aesthetic Movement through Algernon's characterisation as a dandy, e.g. his penchant for luxurious living and focus on the superficial and pleasurable ● Wilde's critique of the avoidance of social responsibilities through use of elaborate deceptions, e.g. the creation of Bunbury ● dramatic use of witty dialogue, satirising Algernon's self-absorption, e.g. the weather as 'the last refuge of the unimaginative' ● Algernon as a dramatic foil to Jack ● the potential for Algernon to represent Wilde's alter ego. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question number	Indicative content
11	***The Rover*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: ● Behn's characterisation as reflective of patriarchal norms of the time, e.g. the hierarchies within the group of Cavaliers ● Behn's exploration of Restoration-era values regarding arranged marriages as a means of securing financial status, e.g. Hellena's arranged marriage; her satirical dialogue ● Behn's dramatic presentation of Angellica's character as challenging social conventions, and her ultimate fate ● presentation of social conventions as influencing characters' moral dilemmas, e.g. soliloquy expressing Florinda's choice between love and duty ● use of the play's resolution to follow the conventions of Restoration comedies and restore social order, e.g. Florinda and Hellena's marriages ● candidates may disagree with the statement, e.g. presentation of characters' challenges to contemporary expectations such as Florinda's desire to choose her own husband. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.
12	***The Rover*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: ● the development of Willmore and Hellena's relationship in the context of disguise and deceit is possibly reflective of contemporary social conventions ● use of dramatic irony to engage the audience in Willmore's libertine behaviours, e.g. his flirting with Hellena whilst disguised as a monk ● dramatic presentation of Willmore's relationships with Hellena and Angellica as reflecting the libertine attitudes of the time, suggesting their interactions are more about pleasure than about love ● dramatic presentation of Willmore and Hellena's interactions, e.g. the satirical tone of their dialogue ● Behn's use of irony and foreshadowing to underscore the uncertainty in their relationship, e.g. mistaken identity ● ways in which Behn uses these characters to usurp genre conventions, e.g. Hellena as the female rake figure; Willmore as the flawed hero. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question number	Indicative content
13	***A Streetcar Named Desire*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: ● dramatic and symbolic presentation of Blanche's embodiment of the Southern belle archetype and her calculated attempts to conform with social expectations ● Williams' use of dramatic irony in his presentation of Blanche's character, e.g. her alcoholism ● some candidates will argue against the statement, e.g. structural unfolding of Blanche's past increases sympathy throughout the play as her loss and vulnerability are revealed ● dramatic presentation of Blanche's strategic use of the truth as manipulation, e.g. analepsis; presentation of a romanticised version of her marriage to Allan Gray ● Williams' dramatic use of setting and film noir conventions, e.g. the shadowy apartment as symbolic of obscuring of the truth ● Williams' use of language to present the changing dynamics of the South and Blanche's social status, e.g. juxtaposition between Blanche's elevated speech and Stanley's pragmatism. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.
14	***A Streetcar Named Desire*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: ● Williams' dramatic presentation of Blanche's avoidance of light as symbolic of her inability to confront her past and her own ageing ● Williams' dramatic presentation of Stella's denial of Stanley's violence ● dramatic effects of the structural motif of the Varsouviana polka to underscore Blanche's fear of madness and her inability to deal with this ● Williams' dramatic use of Blanche's Southern belle persona as a form of denial, juxtaposed with the fears revealed in her soliloquies ● use of the conventions of psychological realism to present characters' denial of reality, e.g. dramatic monologue ● presentation of USA post-war society as exposing characters' denial of reality. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question number	Indicative content
15	***Sweat*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: ● symbolic use of the bar setting at the end of the play as emphasising the characters' limited options for escape ● Nottage's dramatic use of realistic dialogue to emphasise the emotional and financial effects of the factory closure, e.g. Tracey's emotional reaction ● dramatic use of structure, e.g. foreshadowing and analepsis, ● to create a sense of inevitability and pessimism ● the ending's underlining of the minimal improvement in characters' lives, and the symbolic absence of Tracey as reflective of the contemporary ennui in USA society ● candidates may argue against the statement, e.g. the relationship of Oscar and Stan; the ending stage directions between Chris and Jason ● Nottage's use of the newsreel preceding the final scene to underscore a sense of pessimism, linking to the context of continued economic struggles of deindustrialised communities in the USA. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.
16	***Sweat*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: ● alternative responses to the statement, e.g. Oscar's dramatic reversal of fortunes at the end ● Nottage's dramatic representation of ambition through characters' aspirations, e.g. Chris' aspirations to be a teacher, and the foregrounding of his experiences as a black man as a limiting factor to those ambitions ● dramatic use of dialogue in the presentation of the conflicts surrounding Cynthia's promotion, e.g. her confrontation with Tracey; racial tensions, 'I betcha they wanted a minority.' ● dramatic symbolism and structural presentation of the breakdown of Cynthia's friendship with Tracey to explore the costs and alienation of her ambition, e.g. the confrontation at the bar ● dramatic presentation of the ambitions of Tracey, Cynthia and Jessie, and their need for stability and control in the context of the economic turmoil of deindustrialised USA ● presentation of characters' contrasting ambitions, e.g. Chris wants to go to college; Jason wants a motorbike. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Question number	Indicative content
17	***Waiting for Godot*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: ● the various ways Vladimir and Estragon pass the time in the expectation of Godot's arrival ● the themes of optimism and survival as possible reflections of Beckett's experiences in WWII ● use of repetition throughout the play to emphasise the sense of waiting, e.g. repeated references to visitation and redemption ● the use of humour to alleviate pessimism as a feature of Absurdist drama ● Vladimir and Estragon's caring relationship with each other giving some sense of optimism in their waiting ● structural repetition of dialogue to reinforce their continued optimistic expectations. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.
18	***Waiting for Godot*** Candidates may refer to the following in their answers: ● presentation of waiting as a metaphor for the human condition ● dramatic use of structure to emphasise the repetitive nature of time spent waiting, e.g. the repetitive actions, and use of cyclical structure ● Beckett's avoidance of definite temporal references and the creation of ambiguity, e.g. characters' struggles to recall past events, 'He said Saturday. (Pause) I think' ● Beckett's stagecraft emphasising the futility of the characters' waiting, e.g. the minimal movement; leafless tree; static scenery ● use of absurdist humour to engage the audience while the characters wait, e.g. Estragon's attempt to remove his boot ● the concept of waiting as central to the play's exploration of meaninglessness and futility, linking to contemporary post-war anxieties, e.g. the endless wait for Godot as symbolic of the purposeless nature of existence. These are suggestions only. Accept any valid alternative response.

Please refer to Specific Marking Guidance when applying this marking grid.		
AO1 = bullet point 1		AO2 = bullet point 2
Level	**Mark**	**Descriptor (AO1, AO2)**
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–4	**Recalls information/descriptive** • Recalls basic points with few accurate references to texts. Recalls limited concepts and terms. Ideas are unstructured with frequent errors and technical lapses. • Uses a highly narrative or descriptive approach. Shows overall lack of understanding of how meanings are shaped in texts and the writer's craft.
Level 2	5–9	**General understanding/approach** • Makes general points and references texts, though not always securely. Gives general explanation of concepts and terminology. Ideas are organised but writing has errors and technical lapses. • Gives surface readings of texts by commenting on straightforward elements. Shows general understanding of how meanings are shaped in texts and the writer's craft.
Level 3	10–14	**Clear understanding/exploration** • Offers a clear response, providing examples. Accurate use of concepts and terminology. Ideas are expressed with few errors and lapses in expression. • Demonstrates clear approach to how meanings are shaped in texts. Has clear knowledge which shows understanding of the writer's craft.
Level 4	15–19	**Consistent application/exploration** • Constructs a consistent argument with examples, confident structure and precise transitions. Uses appropriate concepts and terminology. Expression is secure with carefully chosen language. • Displays a secure understanding of how meanings are shaped in texts. Provides evidence of effective and consistent understanding of the writer's craft.
Level 5	20–24	**Discriminating application/exploration** • Provides a consistently effective argument with textual examples. Applies a discriminating range of concepts and terminology. Secure expression with carefully chosen language and sophisticated transitions. • Displays discrimination when evaluating how meanings are shaped in texts. Shows a critical understanding of the writer's craft.

Please refer to Specific Marking Guidance when applying this marking grid.		
AO3 = bullet point 1		AO5 = bullet point 2
Level	**Mark**	**Descriptor (AO3, AO5)**
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–4	**Recalls information/descriptive** • Uses a highly-descriptive approach and there is little awareness of the significance and influence of contexts. • Has explanatory approach to reading texts. Shows little awareness of different interpretations.
Level 2	5–9	**General understanding/approach** • Makes general points supported by examples, though not always securely. Has a general awareness of the significance and influence of contextual factors. • Offers straightforward explanations with general awareness of different interpretations.
Level 3	10–14	**Clear understanding/exploration** • Offers clear points supported by examples. Shows clear understanding of contextual significance and influence. • Shows clear understanding of different interpretations and alternative readings of texts.
Level 4	15–19	**Consistent application/exploration** • Deals in a consistent way with how context is significant and influential. Able to explore links in a detailed way. • Displays consistent analysis of different interpretations and alternative readings of texts.
Level 5	20–24	**Discriminating application/exploration** • Displays an evaluative approach. Deals in a discriminating way with the significance and influence of contextual factors. • Evaluates different interpretations and alternative readings of texts and explores these confidently.