

## Notes and guidance: Paper 1 Section B – Poetic voices

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This resource explains how the question in the specimen assessment materials for AS Paper 1, Section B, Poetic voices, addresses the assessment objectives, with some suggestions as to how each task might be approached. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of every point that could be made, but it provides teachers and students with some guidance that will support their work on this paper. In addition, this resource is designed to help teachers and students engage with the specimen mark scheme to understand how it will be applied by our examiners. This will be useful when preparing for examination. Furthermore, the information provided here will help teachers to create their own questions and mark scheme for use in the classroom.

### *Engaging with the question*

**Read ['Follower' and 'Mid-Term Break']. Compare and contrast how [Heaney] presents [childhood] in these poems.**

The students' classroom study of their chosen poems will have been focused on the nature and function of poetic voice in the telling of events and the presentation of people (outlined in the Specification, pages 14–15). They will have considered the role of language in the construction of perspective and explored and analysed:

- the presentation of time: understanding the past, reviewing past experiences, the manipulation of time
- the importance of place: locations and memories, the ways in which these are captured in voice(s), and their effects on individuals
- how people and their relationships are realised through point of view, attitude, specific registers, physical descriptions, speech and thought
- the presentation of events through the poet's selection of material, the use of narrative frames and other poetic techniques.

Students will always be directed to read two named poems and to write about these poems in their answer. The question will always follow a similar pattern: 'Compare and contrast how [the poet] presents [an aspect of the named two poems]'. The command word 'compare' means to consider how the two poems are similar; the command word 'contrast' means to consider how the two poems are different. The word 'presents' directs students to consider the ways in which the writer has shaped meaning. There will always be a central focus to the question (in this case, the poet's presentation of childhood).

## How the question addresses the Assessment Objectives

The AOs assessed in these questions are A01, A02 and A04 (A01 15 marks, A02 15 marks, A04 10 marks)

The question wording gives students clear direction to address the Assessment Objectives that are assessed in Section B of Paper 1. Specifically:

- A01 is pointed to through the command word 'presents'. In order to consider how the writer presents an aspect of the poems, students will need to:
  - apply concepts and use methods as appropriate to illuminate the poem
  - use correct and relevant terminology for the context of the question
  - use coherent written expression in their answer, adopting an academic style and register.
- A02 is also pointed to through the word 'presents' asking students to consider the way in which the poet has shaped meaning. In order to address this Assessment Objective, students will need to:
  - demonstrate an understanding of the question focus by providing valid interpretations and through the selection of relevant parts of the poems
  - analyse poetic techniques and authorial craft, providing interpretive comments on any techniques credited under A01.
- A04 is foregrounded in the wording of the question and the use of the command words 'compare and contrast'. In order to address this Assessment Objective, students need to:
  - demonstrate an ability to make links between poems
  - explore ways in which the poems are similar and different.

## How the Assessment Objectives apply to Section B

**A01: Apply concepts and methods from integrated linguistic and literary study as appropriate, using associated terminology and coherent written expression.**

The three strands within each level are about:

### *Using terminology*

Clearly in their response to this question students will need to use correct and relevant terminology for the concepts, methods and features they select in order to thoroughly examine how Heaney presents childhood in 'Follower' and 'Mid-Term Break'.

In responding to the question on the specimen paper students could identify accurately and precisely how, for example, Heaney has used a child-like register or variations in syntax.

### *Applying concepts and methods*

In order to examine how Heaney presents childhood in the given poems, students will need to apply concepts and use methods as appropriate to illuminate them.

The examples they choose to consider will enable them to illustrate their understanding of these by drawing on the field of Stylistics. They will need to draw on appropriate language levels (eg grammar, lexis, phonology) and use correct and relevant terminology for the concepts they discuss, the methods they use and features they discuss.

In responding to the specimen question, students could, for example, choose to comment on Heaney's use of particular word classes and semantic fields in order to consider the effects of the patterns produced or to explore the effects of Heaney's use of spatial and temporal deixis.

### *Expressing and presenting ideas*

Students will need to use coherent written expression in their answer in order to efficiently convey their ideas about how Heaney presents childhood in these poems. Their ability to maintain an academic style and organise their ideas into topics and paragraphs is also being assessed.

**A02: Analyse ways in which meaning are shaped in texts.**

The two strands within each level are about:

### *Question focus, selecting relevant parts of the extract and providing valid interpretation*

This part of A02 assesses the student's ability to maintain a relevant focus on the question throughout their answer, to make appropriate choices of examples from the extract and to include valid ideas on these choices. In responding to the specimen question, students would need to ensure that their discussion remains on how Heaney presents childhood in the given poems.

### *Analysing narrative techniques and authorial craft*

This part of the A02 assesses the student's ability to analyse and interpret the effects of the writer's crafting within the poems. For example, in responding to the question on the specimen paper, students could discuss how, through Heaney's first person point of view and use of particular techniques, the child's interaction with the adult world is conveyed.

### **A04: Explore connections across texts, informed by linguistic and literary concepts and methods.**

The key words in the question are 'compare and contrast' with these command words directing students to identify similarities and differences in how the writer has presented an idea in the two named poems. They are thus clearly invited to explore connections between the two poems.

For example in the specimen paper, students could make connections between 'Follower' and 'Mid-Term Break' by examining, for example: the use of the first person viewpoint, ways in which the speaker's attitude towards and interactions with adults are conveyed, various poetic techniques and verse structure.

## ***Engaging with the mark scheme***

### **A01:**

The mark scheme descriptor is:

**This rewards students' ability to apply concepts and methods from integrated linguistic and literary study to poetry, and specifically to the construction of poetic voice and the presentation of time, place, people, and events. A01 also rewards the ability to maintain an academic style throughout the essay.**

The mark scheme shows that A01 assesses three distinct stands:

- use of terminology
- selection of analysis at different/appropriate language levels

- expression and presentation of ideas.

Awarding at the different levels (1-5) for the *first strand* will be based on the level of accuracy and precision in using terminology and labelling features.

For the *second strand*, the selection of language levels relevantly to the texts (rather than any hierarchical judgements about the language levels themselves) and the quality of discussion of the patterns and effects of these is being awarded. In addition, reference ought to be made to features (where relevant to the specific poems) that represent distinctive ways that poetic voice might be constructed so as to allow for the third strand of A02 that focuses on **an analysis of the construction of poetic voice and authorial craft**.

The *third strand* of A01 rewards, at the higher levels, the ability to present ideas academically with good expression and development of ideas, as well as the overall structural organisation of the answer to respond to the question.

Indicative content for A01 includes likely/possible language features (at any analytical level) that students could comment on. In particular, those features which are foregrounded are highlighted. In addition, reference is made to the following **features** where relevant that represent **distinctive ways that poetic voice might be constructed** so as to allow for the third strand of A02 (**analysis of the construction of poetic voice and authorial craft**):

- particular configurations of 'telling': who speaks and to whom, and any changes that occur within the poem(s)
- possible reasons for wanting to tell this story – the 'tellability' of the poem
- how poetic voice is set up and developed across poem(s)
- ways in which perspective is constructed
- the various ways of representing speech and thought (character v speaker driven)
- different uses of memories and representations of events (e.g. childhood)
- how storyworlds, locations and time frames are constructed and developed
- other important authorial/speaker choices such as text layout and structure, use of allusions and intertextual references

Students who receive a Level 1 mark for A01 will produce very limited answers. At the top of this level there may be some very broad description of a limited number of features. Towards the bottom of this level, there will be very few coherent points made. It is likely that answers at this level will lack relevance and will not be well expressed. By Level 3, students will select some appropriate language levels on which to base their answers and will make some valid comments on these, but are unlikely to include the range of features identified in Levels 4 and 5, and there will be some inaccuracy in the application of terminology. Answers will contain discussion of some clear topics but others are likely to be less thoroughly considered. Ideas will be expressed in a straightforward way with some use of academic register. Students who receive a Level 5 mark for this Assessment Objective will select entirely appropriate language levels to comment on, supported by well chosen examples from the extract. They will use terminology accurately and there will be strong evidence of an ability to evaluate patterns in language use. They will use a controlled academic style and register and produce sustained answers.

## A02:

The mark scheme descriptor is:

**This relates to students' ability to examine the ways that meanings are shaped in their chosen text through the selection and exploration of relevant selections of poems in response to a specific focus.**

The mark scheme shows that this assesses three distinct strands:

- maintaining a focus and selection of appropriate detail
- an ability to interpret
- analysis of construction of poetic voice and authorial craft.

The mark scheme band descriptors highlight that students are required to make selections from both poems. Where an answer includes selections from only one poem it cannot be placed above Level 2. However, (unlike A04) even coverage of poems is not necessary as it is the appropriateness of the selections chosen that is being assessed.

Students' considerations of all these three strands will help determine both the level they are awarded and where within that level they are placed.

A defining feature of this specification is the matching of precise descriptive linguistics with interpretative comment. The first two strands, call upon students to select appropriate material in line with the question focus, and use precise and accurate terminology (A01) in the service of literary criticism. The third

stand of A02 awards comment on any of the techniques identified for A01. The generic marking grid is divided into five levels, the highest achievement being Level 5 and the lowest Level 1. Each level is divided into two key aspects of the assessment:

- relevance / interpretations / selection of examples from the poems
- awareness of how meanings are shaped

For the first two strands (maintaining a focus, selection of appropriate detail and an ability to interpret) the indicative content will highlight some of the **key themes/interpretations** of the poem that might be possible. For the final strand (analysis of the construction of poetic voice and authorial craft), indicative content in the mark scheme also includes interpretative comment on any of the techniques identified for A01.

Students who receive a Level 1 mark for A02 will struggle to engage with the question. At the upper end of this level, there may be some attempt to make limited reference to the poems or the answer may contain reference to only one poem. Ideas are likely to be irrelevant or offering very limited interpretation. There will be brief or no reference to how the writer has shaped meaning. By Level 3, students will produce answers that are generally relevant and include some discussion of appropriate examples from both poems. Interpretations will be generally valid although lacking in the more precise and developed ideas of the Levels 4 and 5. Students who reach Level 5 will produce answers that are knowledgeable and perceptive. They will include a judicious selection of examples from both poems and use these to investigate closely the writer's craft. There will be close analysis of details with some subtle interpretation.

#### **AO4:**

The mark scheme descriptor is:

**This relates to students' ability to make links between poems, and draw attention to similarities and differences.**

The mark scheme shows that this assesses students' abilities to explore connections between texts, highlighting similarities and differences.

The mark scheme band descriptors also highlight the coverage of the texts. This is assessed in AO4 as the comparative element requires a discussion of both poems.

Coverage of the poems is expected to be 'even' for Levels 4-5, while a slight imbalance is possible in Level 3 with the expectation of 'reasonably even' coverage. Where the poems are covered unevenly, Levels 1-2 can be awarded.

This means in practice that where the students' focus is mainly on one poem, although there might be a little discussion of the other, the maximum possible mark for AO4 will be 4. Where one of the poems is not discussed at all then a mark of 0 will be awarded as there will be no connections made between poems. An answer that offers two separate analyses of the poems cannot be placed above Level 1 for AO4.

Indicative content in the mark scheme draws attention to how students could compare and contrast

- key/foregrounded language features
- ways that poetic voice is constructed
- key themes/interpretations

Students who receive a Level 1 mark for AO4 will struggle to make few connections between the poems. There may be an isolated basic point of comparison. By Level 3, students will produce answers that include some ideas on ways in which the poems are similar and/or different. They are likely to be of a more generalised nature with one or two clearer references. Students who reach Level 5 will produce answers that include well developed ideas on links between the poems and make perceptive comments in comparing and contrasting them. They will contain detailed consideration of ways in which the poems are similar and different.