

1. Select

One extract of about 70 lines from the drama text you are studying. Extracts do not have to start at the beginning of a scene but can be chosen from any point in the text but choose an extract that can coherently stand alone. See past papers for examples.

2. Process

In the extract you have chosen, broadly think about C.A.S.T. – Character, Action, Staging, Themes:

Character

- Consider inference – if the characters really mean what they are saying to each other / to themselves – if not, what do they mean / think?
- Re-read the extract with extra emphasis on dialogue to help you understand the meaning and tone of the language – does one speaker dominate? Are speaking turns even? Are there any incomplete speaking turns or interruptions?
- How are literary and linguistic terms used to reveal the key attitudes of characters?

Action

- Check that you have understood what is happening in the extract, including plot events as well as how the characters relate to each other.

Staging

- Think about staging and performance. Consider the stage as a space – how is it set out? Does the playwright give us any directions? What would the set look like? (you might consider the play in its original production or you might also think about more recent performances and interpretations of the play) Is there any direction on characters' costumes? Are there any props on stage? How is lighting used? Are there any sound effects on stage? You could consider how the characters move about on stage, too, if the playwright gives any indication of movement and action.
- How might elements of staging support the inferences you have made about characters and action?

Themes

- Think about the key themes that are explored in your chosen extract, and how the playwright uses character, action and staging to explore these themes.

3. Approaches

Consider the different angles from which the extract might be approached in an examination. See past papers for examples. Under the heading 'By focusing closely on the linguistic and literary techniques used...' consider:

- The presentation of the characters and situation.
- The presentation of a specific character or relationship between characters.
- The presentation of a specific theme.
- How comedy is created / how humour is used.
- How dramatic tension is created.

4. Exercise

Try writing the first 200 words of a response to your question. Write about your chosen extract, taking careful note of literary and linguistic features and their impact.

Do

- Give a very concise and brief summary of the key action in your extract.
- Move on very quickly to close linguistic analysis, using terms to show your understanding of the playwright's style and techniques.
- Make sure you use terms accurately and sensitively.
- Remember that this is a drama text which means it is for performance, so take account of staging.
- Be mindful that this is a text to be spoken, and place some focus on spoken language features, making sure you use the correct terminology and that you consider the impact of these on character and attitude.
- Take care with the quality of your written expression.

Don't

- Write lengthy or redundant introductions.
- Retell the 'story'.
- Make extended references to context if it is not being assessed.
- Use overlong quotations or copy out large portions of the text.
- Just write about the text as if it is narrative prose – remember it is a text designed to be spoken and performed.
- Use terminology for the sake of it or descriptively. Always link it to meaning and inferences.