

Eduqas English Language and Literature GCE: Component 2

Practising the extract question (Section A): Antony and Cleopatra (*The Collins Alexander Complete Works of William Shakespeare*)

“By focusing on the linguistic and literary techniques used, explore the dramatic significance of this extract from...”

AO1: Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression.

AO2: Analyse the ways in which meanings are shaped in literary text.

1.

Select a passage from the play about 30-35 lines long. It should make sense on its own. Look at past papers for examples of this if required.

2.

Look up any words that you are not familiar with, e.g. “dotage”, “plated”, “tawny” from 1i.

3. Now ask yourself:

- How does this extract relate to what has happened previously? As an example, Antony’s lexis in 1ii from l.129 contrasts with that of his earlier dialogue with Cleopatra. Only mention other parts of the play briefly, in passing, where necessary.
- Who is on stage? How does this extract reveal more of their character? If there is more than one character, what is their relationship at this point? What is going on between them? How is this conveyed in the language?
- Are there any striking visual effects (e.g. someone kneeling, someone on a balcony, someone brandishing a sword in threat?) If so, how do they relate to the language?
- Is there any dramatic irony? What effect does it have?
- Speech types (e.g. prose or verse, soliloquy, stichomythia)? What effect do they have?
- What kind of tone is used? Any contrasts?
- Conversation analysis: Is there a dominant speaker? What does it tell us?
- Grice’s maxims – are any being flouted or broken? What effect do they have?
- How is imagery and lexis used? What effect do they have?
- IMPORTANTLY: If there is high emotion, does it use the grand style? Details of this? Effects?

The Grand Style

Intensified lexis

compounds, such as “divers-colour’d”, “flower-soft” - 2ii; also *polysyllabic/latinate lexis*: “exigent” “inevitable” “prosecution” - 4xiv

Metaphors and similes

“show the cinders of my spirits/ through the ashes of my chance” 5ii “like a burnish’d throne” - 2ii

Sound patterns

alliteration “gone/gaze/gap” 2ii, *assonance* “tune of flutes” - 2ii, *consonance* “pluck her back” - 1ii, *reverse rhyme* “field of feasts” - 2i, *pararhyme* “no less... loss” - 3xiii, *rhyme* “no wars without doors” - 2i - *Antony and Cleopatra* is full of these.

Epithets

“his goodly eyes”, “great Pompey”, “shrill-tongu’d Fulvia” “courteous Antony”

Metrical features, such as

disruption (where the iambic pentameter is changed), such as *spondees* (for emphasis), trochaic line starts; but also *caesuras*, *enjambments*, *short or long lines*...

Periodic sentences

where a long sentence delays the main finite verb until the end, for climax e.g. 3vi Caesar “I’ th’market-place... enthron’d”

Rhetorical features

for example, *antithesis*, *apostrophe*, *articulus*, *personification*, *chiasmus*, *metonymy*, etc.

4.

Now write your response (24 minutes total). If you have a study partner, check each other’s work. If not, come back to it in 24 hours and reassess it.

Do

- Start directly and relevantly; look for patterns of language and imagery; make and support points succinctly; always say what effect the language has. Remember that it’s a play!

Don’t

- Write lengthy and redundant introductions e.g. “This is from Act 1 Scene 1 of Antony and Cleopatra, written in 1607...”; make extended references to context; try to take account of other readings or interpretations; use overlong quotations or copy out large portions of the text.