

AO1: Knowledge and Understanding (25%)

- ✓ When you've chosen your pre- and post-2000 texts, **the most important step is to develop a thorough knowledge of both by reading them carefully** and with an open mind. Remember novels are not *'about'* one idea but are multi-faceted and nuanced rather than black and white. Put simply, the more often you have read the texts, the better you will be able to write about them.
- ✓ Once you've decided on a topic for your response, reread the texts from a **critical, analytical perspective** focusing on key aspects.
- ✓ Work with your teacher on crafting a **carefully worded title or task** which will have a clear literary focus and address all the relevant AOS.
- ✓ As with your exam texts, use your **study skills** to gain confident knowledge and understanding, such as chapter summaries; character development maps; plot/event charts; quotation lists, etc.
- ✓ When you're ready to start drafting, write a plan outlining your argument on **one side of A4**. (See advice on Eduqas website.)
- ✗ Don't rely too heavily on **on-line study sites** which seem an easy way to gain knowledge and understanding. There is no short cut or simple alternative to reading and rereading the texts. Doing the groundwork for yourself is much more effective than using often generalised, simplified commentaries.

Exercise: Read as much as possible as preparation for this component. Ask your teacher for suggestions and **start reading as early you can**. The more widely you read, the more experience you will have to draw on when writing about your chosen texts.

AO2: Analysing Technique (25%)

- ✓ Remember to focus on **how** the writers' conscious choices have conveyed meaning and shaped response (see Part 1). Read critically and analyse **how** each writer has presented the topic you're focusing on. Keep asking yourself: **How is that effect achieved? Why did the writer make that choice?**
- ✓ Keep the literary genre in mind and remember you are analysing **prose technique**, not poetry or drama.
- ✓ Develop each point fully, supporting your claims about each writer's choices with **convincing, carefully chosen textual reference**.
- ✓ Try to show **whole text knowledge and understanding** rather than relying on a few short extracts. Demonstrate a confident grasp of the novel genre by considering how ideas and themes are **developed** in detail across the whole text.
- ✗ **Don't simply feature-spot** or label terms for their own sake. Always link comments on prose devices or narrative technique to your overall argument and the novel's main concerns or ideas.

Exercise: Choose any novel opening and analyse the writer's choices in presenting character/setting/ atmosphere. (See **Part 3 extracts**.)

AO3: Factoring in Context (25%)

- ✓ It's best to read your chosen texts the first time **without too much emphasis on context**. Approach them as consciously crafted novels first and then start to consider how your understanding is affected by relevant background factors.
- ✓ Although considering the influence of contextual factors on the writing and reception of the texts is important, **context should never drive the**

response. Contextual facts will never be rewarded in their own right but only if they support a literary response (AO1) and a critical reading of the texts (AO2). A novelist may have been influenced by an event, belief or issue but still **chose to write creatively** rather than producing a persuasive factual work. Remember you're studying English Literature, not history, sociology or philosophy!

- ✓ The topic you're exploring and how it's presented in the texts should always come first, **supported** by a consideration of contextual influences. After making a reference to context, always go back to the text: **TASK – TEXT – CONTEXT**.
- ✓ Aim to consider a **range** of contextual influences, including literary ones. Try to read another work by the same writer or from a similar genre or era as useful perspective on your chosen texts. Your teacher will be able to give advice on this.
- ✗ Avoid **sweeping generalisations** about context as such influences are rarely simple or black and white. Using tentative language suggests a more mature appreciation of the complex relationship between text and context and can address both AO3 and AO5 at the same time, e.g. **"The writer may have been influenced by contemporary attitudes as we can perhaps see in chapter two when..."**
- ✗ Avoid too much emphasis on **biographical context** which is always highly speculative and can demonstrate a less than confident grasp of the novel and how it differs from autobiography.

Exercise: Look again at **Extract (a)** which is set in a post-WW2 American society where long-established social values were being questioned, especially by the young. How might this contextual knowledge affect your response to the presentation of the central character?

Exercise: Look again at **Extract (c)**. How is your response affected by the knowledge that the novel draws on the writer's experience of WW1?

AO4: Making Connections (12.5%)

- ✓ Try to make **literary links** between the texts rather than simply thematic or contextual ones. Focus on **how** each writer has presented the relevant aspect, so that AO4 connections are rooted in AO2 analysis.
- ✓ Exploring differences as well as similarities can be helpful when you're trying to make **illuminating** connections. Try to demonstrate how studying the way one writer has presented a character, event or idea has **shed light** on the other writer's choices or technique.

Exercise: Look again at **Extracts (a) and (b)** and consider how your response to the central character in Extract (a) has been affected by comparison with Extract (b). Think about the different narrative viewpoints and formality of language used.

Exercise: Reread **Extracts (b) and (d)**. Compare and contrast the use of authorial intervention in these extracts.

AO5: Making Use of Alternative Readings (12.5%)

- ✓ Try to read **high-quality literary criticism** of your chosen texts and use this to help you inform your own response.
- ✓ It is often easier to find worthwhile critical material on the pre-2000 text but you can apply such views to the post-2000 work too, addressing AO4 and AO5 at the same time, e.g. **"This criticism of Dickens' tendency to create 'grotesque caricatures' might also be levelled at the characters we see in..."**
- ✗ Don't rely too heavily on **internet sources** for views of the texts as the quality can be inconsistent. Ask your teacher for advice on how to find worthwhile critical material.
- ✗ Don't simply quote an alternative reading of the text without comment. Always use **quoted views to discuss the texts** and show how they have affected your response. As with AO3, go back to the text to assess the value of the views you've read and how much you agree.

Exercise: Reread **Extract (c)**. How far would you agree with the view that the writer 'strips language to the bone and makes it impossible for us to feel any empathy with the characters or their experiences.?'