

Section A part i: Extract /20

A01 (5 marks)

A01 will assess your ability to engage with the extract and respond to your given question. Remember, A01 is all about ideas and concepts, so you need to be thinking carefully about the character(s) you've been given. Make sure you are always focusing on how they are being presented.

Top Tip: It can be useful to consider what we might call the 'internal context' of the extract. In other words, where in the novel the extract is taken from. We all know that characters in any novel are never completely static (i.e. they never stay the same). It's important to consider, when thinking about the way a character is being presented, what has just taken place in the narrative. Remember though, it's not helpful just to start your answer by stating what has just happened before your given extract. You have to make a point about how this has affected the presentation of the character(s) you've been asked to write about. For example, for the Part (i) of the 2018 *Sense and Sensibility* question, an effective way to use internal context to start could have been: 'Taken from the part of the novel Elinor has just told Marianne of Lucy Steele and Edward's engagement, the reader is presented by Marianne's shock and her emotive response to the news, in stark contrast with Elinor's stoicism...'

A02 (10 marks)

A02 asks you to carefully consider **how** the writer has used language, structure and other narrative techniques to present the character(s) you've been asked to focus on. For example, if you think that Elinor is presented as stoic, then **how** has the writer encouraged you to think this? Remember, characters are **constructs**; they are built and designed by writers just like houses are built and designed by builders and architects. Once you start thinking of writers in this way, you'll stop thinking about the characters they create as real people, helping you to analyse them more effectively.

Top Tip: It's really important to consider more than just the writer's use of language. A lot of candidates will be able to pick out a useful metaphor or a simile, or even 'dig deep' on a number of words and discuss how the writer has used their connotations to present the given character(s). More considered approaches will also think about the writer's use of dialogue, i.e. **how** does the writer craft the characters' speech – do they use long, complex sentences with many clauses or short, snappy utterances? Perhaps consider their use of structure within the extract. Does the writer use dramatic irony/foreshadowing? Do they withhold information? etc. It's also useful to consider what **other characters** say about the character you've been asked to focus on. This will often add to the presentation of the character in the question.

Section A part ii: Essay question /40

A01 (5 marks)

A01 will assess your knowledge and understanding of the novel in its entirety, as well as your skills at **organising your ideas** into a response which clearly addresses **and answers** the question. It might be helpful to think of what we could perhaps call a '**line of argument**' (LOA). This is a clear argument that uses at least one character and at least one event in the text to directly address the question you have been given. If you've been asked a 'how far do you agree' question, then this LOA should either support or challenge the view in the question. You'll need more than one LOA in your answer as you need to demonstrate knowledge of the text in its entirety, not just one part of it. Breaking your answer down into two or three LOAs can give your answer a clear structure that both you and the examiner can follow. Think of your LOA as the **foundation** of your answer – the base on which it will be built. Because of this, it needs to be **strong** and **relevant**.

A02 (5 marks)

A02 will assess your analytical skills as you discuss the writer's use of language and narrative techniques to express the ideas of the novel. The purpose of adding textual support/analysis to your argument (your LOA) is to **strengthen** and **support** it. References to the text often provide a good springboard for you to link to relevant contextual and critical discussion.

Top Tip: Think about images (motifs) and symbols that occur across the whole novel. What ideas are these used to explore? If relevant, the analysis and discussion of these can often strengthen an answer.

A03 (15 marks)

Most candidates know that A03 means 'context', but context comes in many forms. It might be useful to think about the contexts of production and reception, i.e. when the text was written (produced) and the different audiences who have read it (reception). When thinking about the context of production, a helpful question to ask is: 'what ideas/concepts in the novel would I not understand/fully appreciate if I didn't know something about the time it was written?' For example, it could be argued that, without an understanding of the importance placed on marrying 'well' in Victorian England, we would not be able to fully appreciate Marianne's desperation when she is rejected by Willoughby. Context should be **part of your answer**, not tagged on to it.

A05 (15 marks)

A05 assesses your ability to engage in critical discussion of the text. You are already doing this when you engage with the question and plan your ideas in response to it. Once you have your LOA, you can also consider the critical views or interpretations of the text that either support or challenge your argument. If you're going to use 'crit' (literary criticism) to do this, then you need to engage with it. Like context, you can't just add it to the end of your point. The best way of doing this is to treat it like the text and 'dig deep' on it – linking it to a specific part of the text, a specific character or an idea.

For example - '*The critic Todd argues that Sense and Sensibility is a 'disturbing portrait of the destructive power of sexual love to consume and isolate' and we see the way it 'isolate'(s) Elinor when she has to keep the news of Lucy and Edward's engagement to herself. Elinor herself states...' followed by a quote from the text.*