



ASSESSMENT and
QUALIFICATIONS
ALLIANCE

Teacher Support Meeting

AS/A Level English Literature Specification A

Unit 4 – Support Booklet

Summer 2004
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Contents

Content	Page
Marking Grid	4
Summer 2003 – Unit 4	6
Script and Question	7
An Extract from the Unit 4 Mark Scheme (June 2003)	12
An Extract from the Unit 4, Chief Examiner's Report (June 2003)	14

Please note: This document has been adapted for the AQA Website

Marking Grid

MARKING GRID FOR A LEVEL ENGLISH LITERATURE 6741

	A01	A02ii	A03
	Candidates should be able to communicate clearly the knowledge, understanding and insight appropriate to literary study, using appropriate terminology and accurate written expression	Candidates should be able to respond with knowledge and understanding to literary texts of different types and periods, exploring and commenting on relationships and comparisons between literary texts	Candidates should be able to show detailed understanding of the ways in which choices of form, structure and language shape meanings
Band 1 0-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • frequent lapses in spelling, punctuation, grammar, sentence construction • limited vocabulary hinders expression • technical terms often misunderstood • unclear lines of argument and/or poor deployment of knowledge/evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple narration, description of plot • simple assertion • unsupported/unconnected comments • frequent irrelevance • unassimilated notes • comparisons between texts are mainly on their superficial features 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • few (if any) form, structure or language features identified • very limited (if any) discussion of how language shapes meaning
Band 2 7 - 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some inaccuracies in written expression • vocabulary sufficient to express less complicated ideas • some basic technical vocabulary • arguments supported by general reference to text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sound general knowledge of text • engagement with text • some key issues raised by question identified and understood • appropriate but generalised evidence used to support points • some confidence in the use of secondary sources • comparisons between texts operate on both literal and inferential levels and across genres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some awareness of the importance of form, structure and language to the shaping of meaning • understanding of and response to implicit meanings and attitudes • a general awareness of a writer's techniques and the impact of these on meaning
Band 3 11 - 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • well-controlled and technically accurate expression • varied and appropriate vocabulary used effectively • critical vocabulary deployed accurately • sound arguments supported by appropriate detailed reference to the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • competent and increasingly detailed understanding of text • a clear understanding of the question set • increasing ability to evaluate and consider issues critically • argument is supported by frequent use of short, relevant quotations neatly integrated • systematic comparisons of form, structure and language as well as subject and theme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explanation of the features, form, structure and language which shape meaning • detailed understanding of a writer's techniques and the impact of these on meaning
Band 4 16 - 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • technically accurate, sophisticated style • accurate use of an appropriate and extensive, critical vocabulary • a cogent, well-structured argument • accurate use of an appropriate, extensive critical vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sound knowledge and understanding of text • mature skills of analysis and synthesis • range of ideas supported by close reading • crucial aspects of a question clearly identified • developed, sustained discussion • secure conceptual grasp • skilfully selects for analysis specific aspects of texts, clarifying and developing ideas by comparison and contrast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mature and sophisticated analysis of the ways in which different kinds of form, structure and language shape meaning

	A04	A05ii
	Candidates should be able to articulate independent opinions and judgements, informed by different interpretations of literary texts by other readers	Candidates should be able to show understanding of the contexts in which literary texts are written and understood and evaluate the significance of cultural, historical and other contextual influences on literary texts and study
Band 1 0-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> little (if any) understanding of different interpretative approaches little personal response based upon slender or misinterpreted evidence or insensitive reading of other opinions or text narrow range of meaning asserted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> very limited awareness of the significance of relevant contextual factors on literary works and/or responses to them some awareness of period or movement
Band 2 7 - 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reasonable understanding of appropriate, differing critical positions which may be summarised rather than explored aware that texts may be interpreted in more than one way some evidence of an individual response supported by general reference to the text, but not always balanced or consistent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> an awareness of the importance of contextual factors in shaping literary works or responses to them some specific and appropriate connections between text and context some understanding of the historical, social and cultural interests influencing a text. identifies and comments on points of interest in relation to social, cultural and historical context
Band 3 11 - 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear understanding of differing critical positions appropriate consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of one or more critical views with detailed reference to text and/or other evidence coherent, informed individual response to the text, based on a command of appropriate detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increasingly detailed knowledge of relevant contextual factors or influences detailed connections between text and context understanding of historical factors and cultural elements in a text able to comment on literary influences on a text explains where appropriate how context may affect interpretation of text
Band 4 16 - 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mature understanding of the significance of differing critical positions sophisticated judgement of text based upon an informed consideration of various possibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> detailed knowledge of relevant contextual factors with analysis of their importance specific, detailed and sophisticated connections between text and context evaluates the effect of context upon text understands text in context of literary tradition and influence

Summer 2003 – Unit 4

Question 9 *The Duchess of Malfi* - John Webster

“Webster is a stern moral teacher whose characters are neatly arranged into the good and the bad.”

“Webster in *The Duchess of Malfi* presents life as a moral chaos where there is no justice, and no law either of God or man.”

How far does the play support each of these assertions?

What is **your** view about the ways Webster presents morality in the play?

Question 15 *The Prelude, Books 1 and 2* - William Wordsworth

It is said that the Romantic poet celebrated ‘the exuberant sense of life of the natural human being’.

With reference to two or three passages, chosen where you wish from **one** or **both** of the *Books*, show how Wordsworth demonstrates this characteristic not only in the experiences he describes but also in the language he uses.

Script and Questions

Summer 2003 - Grade A Script

Underscoring denotes a point worthy of credit. Footnotes are the Examiner's comments on the script.

This candidate produced a plan which was noted by the examiner.

Question 9

Both the seemingly opposed views¹ that Webster's characters in 'The Duchess of Malfi' can be neatly arranged into the good and the bad, and Webster presents life as a 'moral chaos' can be supported by the play to a limited extent. The first assertion identifying Webster as a 'stern moral teacher' can be supported by evaluating the audience's response to the individual characters, where they are seemingly arranged into the good and the bad. This is however limited by the over riding sense of moral ambiguity that Webster has created around the characters' motives and actions². This then favours the second assertion of 'moral chaos', but this is itself limited by the sense of justice as extracted in the last scene.

The response of the audience may well be argued to arrange the characters neatly into 'the good and the bad'. Indeed the Cardinal and Ferdinand seem almost to be manifestations of evil³ exacting their murderous will on those they deem to have either crossed or wronged them. This is seen by the blasphemous way⁴ the Cardinal murders Julia with a poisoned Bible and the torturous way⁵ Ferdinand murders his sister, after making her kiss a dead man's hand⁶. It seems clear that along with Bosola, their hired henchman⁷, that these two characters are meant to be interpreted as evil by the audience⁸ and largely condemned. The explicit language and imagery of the play supports this with Bosola being described as 'the only cart of all' 'whose melancholy will poison all goodness'. The cardinal is described as a 'melancholy churchman' and Ferdinand's constant use of animal imagery, mostly negative begins to reveal his embittered nature⁹.

Antonio and the Duchess contrastingly¹⁰ are largely representative of good characters. If it is accepted that the Duchess chooses Antonio for love, then she is a true character who dies a noble death 'Duchess of Malfi' still, and who 'live or die I can do both like a prince'¹¹. Antonio never draws blood and his inability to be dishonest and become skilled as a deceiver seems¹² to reflect a degree of integrity as opposed to incompetence. Therefore as far as the audience may view the characters and their

¹ AO1

² thinking and starting to explore

³ AO1

⁴ AO1

⁵ AO1

⁶ AO2 detail

⁷ AO1

⁸ Webster's intention explored

⁹ detail already suggesting Band 4

¹⁰ neatly arranged, cogent

¹¹ detailed evidence

¹² AO4 not imposing an opinion

actions, Webster seems to be initially engendering a clear split between the good and the bad, those to be liked and disliked that can be seen in moral terms¹³.

This assertion however is by no means entirely consistent, as there seems to be a powerful degree of moral ambiguity around almost all the characters which favours the second assertion that Webster is in fact a ‘stern moral teacher’ but instead presents life as ‘moral chaos’. Whilst it is largely undeniable that the Cardinal and Ferdinand are evil characters with evil intentions expressed clearly by their action. The Duchess and Antonio themselves are not without blemish. Bosola’s seemingly unambiguous role as a hired killer and spy, reluctant but nevertheless doing is compromised by his last actions and words.¹⁴

The Duchess is described as a ‘lusty widow’ by Ferdinand, and is clearly warned by her brothers that a marriage in secret would more probably be ‘executed than celebrated’ and that her ‘darkest actions, nay privatest thoughts will come to light¹⁵’. This puts her actions into a morally ambiguous context. Whether she marries Antonio for love, or as an act of rebellion her actions have clear and devastating consequences¹⁶ as she knows, proclaiming that she is ‘going into a wilderness’. It could be argued that she must take responsibility for the death of Antonio, her children, her brother, Julia and the other members of the court. As Ferdinand notes before his death, ‘my sister, oh my sister she was the cause on’t’¹⁷. She is also not without the ability to deceive, and indeed her very marriage is this, proclaiming to her brother ‘my reputation is safe’. Despite marrying a man of a lower social order in secret through the then frowned upon ‘per verba de presenti’, a legal but disliked marriage ceremony¹⁸. Her marriage is also a selfish rebellion as she proclaims she has not gone about this to create ‘a new world or custom’. In this context, the duchess may be viewed as lusty, deceitful and headstrong embarking upon a selfish rebellion that she is well aware will end in disaster. This favours ‘moral chaos’. The same¹⁹ can be said of the actions of Antonio who endangers himself by marrying the Duchess, quite possibly for ambition. In doing this he is clearly out of his depth – finally demonstrated by his almost comical death from Bosola. A Bosola who has seemingly changed sides and indeed turns from the killer to the avenger of Antonio, the Duchess and Julia and himself. This again favours ‘moral chaos’ so supporting the second assertion that life is in ‘moral chaos’.

This assertion is however limited again²⁰ by the actions of Bosola, who seemingly does bring justice to almost everybody in the play, including himself. He murders the Cardinal and Ferdinand, is involved in the death of Julia and kills Antonio accidentally. If all of their different and mixed motives are seen as both good and bad then there is justice and law.

¹³ QED cogent argument

¹⁴ pursues a subtle line of argument to demonstrate moral chaos

¹⁵ detailed support

¹⁶ excellent argument

¹⁷ knows the detail of the play

¹⁸ telling use of apt vocabulary

¹⁹ QED

²⁰ still exploring but in an ordered frame

It does seem however that in the play Webster presents morality as something that must be perceived by the individual, and ultimately justice and law is enforced either by God or man. Seeing as Webster is addressing a corrupt court it seems most likely that bringing condemnation upon everybody as summed up in Ferdinand's last words 'whether we fall by ambition (arguably Antonio's vice) blood(his own and the Cardinal's) or lust (the Duchess) like diamonds are we cut by our own dust'.²¹ That is to say everybody pays the consequences of their actions.

Therefore both assertions that Webster is a 'stern moral teacher' and 'presents life as moral chaos' can be substantiated to a limited degree in that initially the audience may split the characters neatly and again when looking more clearly there does seem to be a moral chaos. This second assertion is limited by Bosola's actions bringing vengeance. Overall however, it is most likely that Webster is using moral ambiguity and presenting it in this way to bring condemnation on the whole cast, blemishing each character in turn.

Examiner's final comments: 20 marks

AO4: grasp of both views, cogent AO1, detailed knowledge of the text to support a sophisticated argument

AO1: accurate, sophisticated style, fluent, apt vocabulary

AO2: sound knowledge of the play

AO3: mature sense of analysis, synthesis, exploring Webster's presentation

CONCEPTUAL – way above full marks.

²¹ brilliant use of quotation

Question 15

The candidate produced a plan which was noted by the Examiner.

Wordsworth clearly demonstrates ‘the exuberant sense of life in the natural human being’ throughout both books 1 and 2. This comes to the fore most significantly in two passages, one from book 1, the very beginning, the ‘preamble’, and the other from Book 2, where Wordsworth confrontationally addresses science²². Both these passages show that Wordsworth did indeed like the other Romantic poets ‘celebrate the exuberant sense of the life of the natural human being’. There is also evidence in these passages of the contexts in which they were written.

The ‘preamble’ is the most significant passage where Wordsworth celebrates ‘the natural human being’ and its ‘sense of life’. The tone and the language of these first lines, as well as the experiences he describes are driven by a rediscovery of nature and of life. Wordsworth does this firstly through his references to his new found freedom. He also uses words that were very much in the context of the time of writing, when the effects of the French Revolution were still being felt. He talks of being ‘enfranchised’ – a word with political overtones²³ and being ‘free’, ‘at large’, ‘at liberty’. These were not only words of Jean Jacques Rousseau, the philosopher whose work had great effect upon the Romantic era and its literature, but also show Wordsworth rediscovering ‘the exuberant sense of life of the natural human being.’ This becomes more explicit throughout the passage where Wordsworth writes of his experiences and desires to drink ‘wild water’ eat fresh fruit’ and pick ‘green herbs’ from ‘their native bough’²⁴. Wordsworth is returning to a ‘holy life of music and of verse’. This new found choice is also shown by the constant use of question marks ‘point me out my course?’²⁵,

This exuberant sense of the natural human being, coming from and being one with nature is contrasted with the unnatural city a ‘prison’ where ‘he hath been immured’²⁶. It is when he escapes this city that he celebrates this sense of life – most explicitly in the words ‘I breathe again’ – and breath being fundamental to life suggesting that this life was dead in the city.²⁷

In Book 2, Wordsworth’s demonstration of this characteristic is a lot more implicit,²⁸ he attacks the science of man directly, and in doing so is reassessing the dominance of the ‘exuberant sense of the natural human being’ and how it is this sense that man connects with and not ‘puny boundaries’ made in ‘weakness’ that are really a ‘prop to our infirmity’.²⁹ It is in this passage that Wordsworth seems to wish to restore the natural sense of life that humans possess as he has discussed and argued throughout both books addressing ‘God and nature communing’ ‘nature spoke to me’. This is

²² AO1

²³ AO3

²⁴ detailed reference

²⁵ explain?

²⁶ Cogency AO3

²⁷ yes

²⁸ contrast shown

²⁹ real understanding shown by interweaving of question

imagination of reasoning and feeling over logic. The sense of life cannot be plotted by 'geometric rules'³⁰.

A third passage may also be considered in Book 2, which refers to the 'sense of life' as a characteristic of the 'natural human being'. Unlike Book 1 where Wordsworth concentrates more directly upon nature as a force, helping him rediscover his 'sense of life'. Wordsworth looking back upon his childhood addresses the games they played and how jealousy or disappointment 'could be none' and the lying down of 'conquer and conquered alike'. Again Wordsworth demonstrates this characteristic through language and experience implicitly referring back to his 'holy life' by referring to a 'stipend' a word normally associated with clergy but still relevant in the context of his financial allowance.

Wordsworth's poetry was received with contrasting views with some, like Hazlitt³¹ criticising it for over sympathising with 'the sense of life' and nature,

Therefore Wordsworth demonstrates this characteristic throughout both books 1 and 2 in language and through experience. The two passages however emphasise him doing this through a stark comparison between the man made and the natural and the freedom and liberty that is required when the sense of life is rediscovered. He also condemns man's attempt at quantifying nature as a 'succendaneum' or a 'false secondary power' coming to the defence of this characteristic the 'exuberant sense of life' when he fears it is under threat. Also to a lesser extent he fears it is under threat. Also a lesser extent his musings on the past express this in Book 2.

Examiner's final comments: 20 marks

AO5ii: Confidently deals with this Romantic characteristic, detailed knowledge and AO2 understanding

AO1: Sophisticated style; fluent, apt vocabulary, cogent argument

AO3: Mature skills of analysis, synthesis

CONCEPTUAL

³⁰ yes, AO3

³¹ AO5

An Extract from the Unit 4, Mark Scheme (June 2003)

The Duchess of Malfi - John Webster

Question 9

“Webster is a stern moral teacher whose characters are neatly arranged into the good and the bad.”

“Webster in *The Duchess of Malfi* presents life as a moral chaos where there is no justice, and no law either of God or man.”

How far does the play support each of these assertions?

What is **your** view about the ways Webster presents morality in the play?

AO1, AO2ii, AO3 Communicates clearly and appropriately. Responds with knowledge and understanding. Considers form, structure and language.	AO4 Understanding of different opinions. Informed independent opinions and judgements.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties with spelling, grammar, punctuation and expression. • Attention needs to be paid to the setting out of logical argument. • Answers in narrative form. • Simple assertions made on flimsy evidence or on a misreading of the text. • May identify features of language, form and structure without comment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has difficulty in understanding both opinions. • Will tend to narrate parts of the play which seem to touch on the issues raised. • Own view is simple, assertive with little or no textual support. 	Band 1 1-6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tolerable accuracy of spelling, grammar and punctuation. • Expression adequate for the ideas expressed. • Some logical development of argument. • Key issues raised by critics identified and generally understood. • A general rather than a competent knowledge of the play. • Some awareness of the influence of form, structure and language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the first opinion, and partially understands the second. • Supports with general reference those parts of the critics' opinions which are understood. • Though own view is sometimes assertive, it is supported by general reference to the text. 	Band 2 7-10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-controlled and accurate expression. • Uses an appropriate critical vocabulary if appropriate. • Clear lines of argument. • Increasingly competent knowledge and understanding of the play. • Competent understanding of critical views. • Recognition of form, structure and language and appropriate comments on their effects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands both opinions and the differences between them. • Able to set up arguments in response to both critics. • Has a competent knowledge and understanding of the text to support critics' and own arguments. 	Band 3 11-15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technically accurate. • Sophisticated style. • Fluent and telling use of apt and appropriate vocabulary, technical if needed. • Cogent, well-structured argument. • Sound knowledge of play. • Grasp of critical views. • Mature skills of analysis and synthesis. • Secure conceptual grasp. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a grasp of the views of both critics. • Sets up a cogent essay. • Has a detailed knowledge of the text which enables support of all arguments attempted. 	Band 4 16-20

The Prelude, Books 1 and 2 - William Wordsworth**Question 15**

It is said that the Romantic poet celebrated ‘the exuberant sense of life of the natural human being’.

With reference to two or three passages, chosen where you wish from **one** or **both** of the *Books*, show how Wordsworth demonstrates this characteristic not only in the experiences he describes but also in the language he uses.

AO1, AO2ii, AO3 Communicates clearly and appropriately. Responds with knowledge and understanding. Considers form, structure and language.	AO5ii Evaluate the significance of cultural, historical and other contextual influences on literary texts and study.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties with spelling, grammar, punctuation and expression. • Attention needs to be paid to the setting out of logical argument. • Answers in a narrative form, • Simple assertions made on flimsy evidence or on a misreading of the text. • May identify features of language, form and structure without comment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Finds difficulty</u> in ‘exuberant’, ‘natural human being’. • Will tend <u>to narrate</u> the chosen passages. 	Band 1 1-6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tolerable accuracy of spelling, grammar and punctuation. • Expression adequate for the ideas expressed. • Some logical development of argument. • Key areas of context identified and understood. • A general rather than competent knowledge of the poems chosen. • Some awareness of the influence of form, structure and language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will have <u>some sense</u> of ‘exuberant’ and ‘natural human being’. • Will <u>usually</u> choose appropriate passages. • Will have a <u>general</u> knowledge of the passages chosen. • Will be <u>aware</u> of the language used by Wordsworth in the passages. 	Band 2 7-10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-controlled and accurate expression. • Uses an appropriate critical vocabulary if needed. • Clear lines of argument. • Increasingly detailed understanding of the poems and their contexts. • Recognition of form, structure and language and commentary on their effects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will <u>understand</u> the characteristic described. • Passages will be <u>well-chosen</u>. • Will have a <u>competent</u> knowledge of the passages chosen. • Will be able to <u>comment</u> on the language used. 	Band 3 11-15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technically accurate. • Sophisticated style. • Fluent and telling use of apt and varied vocabulary. • Cogent, well-structured argument. • Sound knowledge and understanding of the poems and their contexts. • Mature skills of analysis and synthesis. • Secure conceptual grasp. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will <u>confidently</u> discuss the characteristic described. • Will have a <u>detailed</u> knowledge and understanding of the passages chosen. • Will <u>analyse</u> language. 	Band 4 16-20

An Extract from the Unit 4, Chief Examiner's Report (June 2003)

LTA4: Texts in Time

General

As a preface to this report, it is important to identify the characteristics of candidates in a number of significant areas of achievement as indicated by the Assessment Objectives tested. **In Section A** the dominant Objective is 4. This assessment objective requires a candidate to develop a personal opinion about a particular aspect of the play studied. This opinion will be related to two different interpretations provided. Achievement of this objective obviously varied from Band to Band in this way:

Band 1 candidates usually

- ignored the two critical opinions provided
- did not take the trouble to try to understand them
- adopted a narrative approach
- asserted their own opinions with little or no textual support

Band 2 candidates usually

- were aware of the two critical opinions provided
- attempted to address them
- supported their own opinions with general reference to the play

Band 3 candidates usually

- understood the thrust of the two critical opinions
- were able to explore the differences between the two
- were able to focus on specific areas of the play, using echoes of the text and the occasional quotation
- were aware when expressing their own views that others may think differently, such are the number of ways of thinking about an issue

Band 4 candidates usually

- had a thorough grasp of the two critical opinions
- had a detailed knowledge of the relevant scenes in the play, interweaving short quotations cleverly into their presentation
- had the skill to analyse and/or synthesise

In Section B the dominant objective is 5ii which tests understanding of the contexts in which literary texts are written and understood and requires evaluation of that context. Achievement of this Objective varied from Band to Band in this way:

Band 1 candidates usually

- ignored the context which is always provided
- 'unloaded' irrelevant and often inaccurate context, often at great length
- had little understanding of the context provided
- wrote about poems which had little or no bearing on the context set
- narrated the themes of the poems
- tried to remember an essay they had written previously on some other topic

Band 2 candidates usually

- were aware of the nature of the context provided
- referred in a general way to the content of relevant poems
- were aware of the nature of the genre
- chose poems or passages of poetry which related to the context set

Band 3 candidates usually

- understood and began to evaluate the context provided
- were able to make links between that and other relevant, **accurate** contextual details they knew
- chose appropriate poems or passages of poetry
- referred to specific areas of poetry
- made some attempt to comment on language, form or structure

Band 4 candidates usually

- had a firm grasp of the context provided and evaluated it
- extended the context provided with their own **accurate** knowledge of cultural, historical or social contexts
- had a detailed knowledge of well-chosen poems, cleverly interspersing short quotations into their essays
- analysed language, form or structure

Assessment Objectives 1, 2ii and 3 achievements play some part in determining the final Band area. The following were the various characteristics in each Band:

Band 1 candidates usually

- wrote down ideas randomly as they were remembered
- ignored the injunctions on the cover of their question paper about spelling, presentation and handwriting
- read skimpily both the text studied and the terms of the question set
- were more concerned with narrative than with presentation of play or poetry

Band 2 candidates usually

- followed an identifiable plan
- were able to express their ideas clearly with a tolerable accuracy of spelling, grammar and punctuation
- had a good, overall idea of the text studied and of the terms of the question set
- commented on features of language, form and structure

Band 3 candidates usually

- demonstrated clear lines of argument
- had some knowledge of critical vocabulary
- expressed themselves clearly and accurately
- could focus on small areas of text
- commented on the effects of language, form or structure in shaping meaning
- understood the terms of a question and wrote relevantly

Band 4 candidates usually

- produced cogent essays
- were fluent, making telling use of apt and varied vocabulary
- had a detailed knowledge of a text which enabled them to range about to make interesting links
- showed mature skills of analysis and/or synthesis
- could conceptualise

The Merchant of Venice

This play vied with *The Duchess of Malfi* as the second most popular choice in Section A. Indeed, more centres are changing to this text, possibly at the expense of *Othello*. Both questions had a substantial number of takers.

The Duchess of Malfi

This text still has a considerable following. Question 9 was the more popular of the choices given.

Question 9

Weaker candidates tended to fall back on a list of characters whom they listed as good or bad with brief sketches of each character. This, however, did allow them to achieve something and helped the process of differentiation. Stronger candidates balanced the two statements and explored the ambiguities in the play, looking particularly at the Duchess and Bosola in their exploration.

Question 10

The few who tackled this question were undoubtedly the more intelligent candidates. It might be possible to surmise that most candidates did not even look at this question, as they were happy to do question 9. Candidates should be advised to consider both questions as possible choices. Otherwise there could be post-examination regrets.

The Prelude, Books 1 and 2

This is the third most popular text in Section B. There was much praiseworthy work on both questions, Question 15 being marginally the more popular of the two. There was a tendency for weaker candidates to produce a pre-packed, catch-all answer on Wordsworth's love of Nature. It is important for candidates to note the **context** stated in the **question**.

Question 15

Many candidates chose relevant passages to illustrate 'exuberant sense of life': the skiff, the theft from the snares, the skating, the expedition to the island being the most popular. Impressive was the number of candidates who were able to offer abundant detail, including quotations. On the other hand, there were candidates whose knowledge seemed sketchy. It is important that candidates study Wordsworth's own

evaluation of his experiences in the more ‘philosophical’ sections which follow his account of them.

Question 16

Some of the experiences mentioned in answers to Question 15 re-appeared in answers to this question. These were apt enough if the candidate addressed Wordsworth’s view of morality which formed the context. Here Wordsworth’s own evaluation on the moral force of his experiences should have played a vital part in an answer. So often it did not.