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Curriculum Authority

Review of standards in A level English Literature

2000–5

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Section 1: General introduction

QCA conducted an enquiry into standards over time in A level English Literature in 2000. The results were published in a report, *Five year review of standards: A level English Literature* (QCA, 2001), which is available on the QCA website at www.qca.org.uk/5781.html. The key issues identified by the enquiry were considered as part of work on this review.

Prior to this enquiry QCA's predecessor body, the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority, produced a report, *Standards in public examinations 1975–1995* (SCAA, 1996), which included a number of recommendations relating to A level English Literature. However, the syllabuses considered in the 2000 enquiry had been approved prior to the publication of this report. It was therefore not expected that those syllabuses would fully address the report's recommendations. The implementation of these recommendations was first effected in the Curriculum 2000 syllabuses, and consequently this review was the first opportunity to consider whether this had been done effectively.

Between them, the A level syllabuses included in this review attracted over 80 per cent of the more than 50,000 candidates who took A level English Literature in 2005.

The following awarding bodies offered syllabuses in the subject: the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA); the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA); Edexcel; Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR) and the Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC).

Section 2: Examination demand in A level English Literature

2.1 Introduction

The major issue that affected all A level examinations between 2000 and 2005 was the change in design of the A level qualification in line with the Curriculum 2000 reforms. This involved a move to unitised assessment based on a six-unit structure. The overall assessment of the A level qualification was split into the first half, Advanced Subsidiary (AS), and the second half, A2. The AS and A2 sections of the course were each assessed by three units, making six units for the A level overall. The level of demand of the AS qualification was reduced from the former Advanced Supplementary qualification, to allow a smoother transition for students moving from GCSE to A level and to allow the new AS to stand as a 'broadening' qualification in its own right. The main requirement of the changes was to carry forward the full A level standard.

The most significant changes for A level English Literature between 2000 and 2005 were:

- the change to a mandatory six-unit AS/A2 assessment structure as described above
- a move to less demanding AS unit assessments and more demanding A2 units
- an explicit synoptic requirement
- the introduction of stepped approaches to certain assessment objectives in order to reflect the differing demand of AS and A2 assessments.

A level syllabuses in 2000 were developed in light of the revised subject core for A level English Literature, which was implemented in 1996. Subject cores tended to deal with syllabus content but not structure. Syllabuses for 2005 conformed to the Curriculum 2000 A level English Literature subject criteria.

2.2 Key issues identified in previous reviews of standards in A level English Literature

The report *Standards in public examinations 1975–1995* (SCAA, 1996) recommended that A level English Literature provision should:

- specify the required amount and range of reading – in terms of the number of texts to be read, the balance of prose, poetry and drama and the balance of texts written before and after 1900 – so that all examinations involve a genuine introduction to the traditions of English Literature
- ensure that candidates are required to demonstrate an accurate and detailed knowledge and an informed understanding of the texts they have studied
- ensure that the tasks set are appropriate to the form of assessment, that the expectations of candidates are clear and that there is comparability of demand between syllabuses; in preparation for this exercise, SCAA should work with the examination boards to review immediately the use of open texts in examinations
- ensure that mark schemes indicate clearly expectations in terms of writing skills.

The subsequent report, *Five year review of standards: A level English Literature* (QCA, 2001), considered whether these recommendations had been implemented, though, as noted above, they were not actually required to be implemented at this point. The main findings noted in this report were as follows.

- Syllabuses were more detailed in 1999 than 1995: they included information regarding prior knowledge, coursework requirements and addressing of assessment objectives by components.

- Syllabuses were more comparable in 1999 than 1995. They were all based on assessment objectives. Range of reading and expectations of types of achievement were stated more clearly. There was less potential for variation in demand both within and between syllabuses as each had fewer optional assessment routes, for example the number for OCR was reduced from 64 to 10. Notably, in the 1999 syllabuses coursework was given a maximum weighting of 20 per cent. Its weighting in 1995 was higher (and slightly more variable) – for example, it could be up to 50 per cent (AQA A) and up to 53 per cent (OCR).
- However, given the revision of the subject core, more changes in the kind of demand were to be expected, with a clearer focus on the assessment objectives.
- Furthermore, none of the syllabuses presented an entirely coherent strategy for ensuring either detailed comment on parts of texts or a wider understanding of whole texts, especially in relation to context. Nor did any syllabus incorporate critical reading or other ways of ensuring that readers engaged with other readers' opinions of texts in a satisfactory fashion.
- Overall, despite the improved frameworks for rigorous and consistent assessment, there was a lack of coherent attention to the full range of assessment objectives. Examinations in 1999, as in 1995, were dominated by relatively miscellaneous selections of texts, rather than by the acquisition of clear modes of study and approaches to critical discussion.

2.3 Materials available

Reviewers considered the syllabus documents, examiners' reports and question papers with associated mark schemes from each of the awarding bodies in 2000 and 2005. AQA materials from 2000 were not available, but the previous review had not identified any significant issues about this syllabus. Details of the syllabuses included in the review are given in Appendix A.

2.4 Assessment objectives

The 2000 syllabuses addressed the six common core assessment objectives for A level English Literature (though the WJEC syllabus included two additional assessment objectives for certain optional routes). The 2005 syllabuses were developed in line with the five Curriculum 2000 assessment objectives for this subject. In each case the assessment objectives detailed the knowledge, understanding and skills that candidates would be required to demonstrate. Notably the assessment objectives were given weightings in the 2005 syllabuses, while in the 2000 syllabuses they were not. The two sets of assessment objectives are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Assessment objectives, 2000 and 2005

2000	2005
AO(i) An ability to respond with understanding to texts of different types and periods	AO1 (10–20% A level) Communicate clearly the knowledge, understanding and insight appropriate to literary study, using appropriate terminology and accurate and coherent written expression
AO(ii) An understanding of the way in which writers' choices of form, structure and language express meanings	AO2i (15–25% AS level) Respond with knowledge and understanding to literary texts of different types and periods
AO(iii) Knowledge of the contexts in which literary works are written and understood	AO2ii (15–25% 'A2 level')
AO(iv) An ability to discuss their own and other readers' interpretations of texts	Respond with knowledge and understanding to literary texts of different types and periods, exploring and commenting on relationships and comparisons between literary texts
AO(v) An ability to produce informed,	

<p>independent opinions and judgements</p> <p>AO(vi)</p> <p>An ability to communicate clearly the knowledge, understanding and insight appropriate to literary study</p>	<p>AO3 (10–20% A level)</p> <p>Show detailed understanding of the ways in which writers' choices of form, structure and language shape meanings</p> <p>AO4 (20–30% A level)</p> <p>Articulate independent opinions and judgements, informed by different interpretations of literary texts by other readers</p> <p>AO5i (15–25% AS level)</p> <p>Show understanding of the contexts in which literary texts are written and understood</p> <p>AO5ii (15–25% 'A2 level')</p> <p>Evaluate the significance of cultural, historical and other contextual influences on literary texts and study</p>
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Although some reorganisation of the assessment objectives was evident between 2000 and 2005, a significant proportion of their content remained the same or was very similar (albeit with slight changes of emphasis or in detail). Broadly speaking, the content of AO(i) from 2000 was addressed by AO2i and AO2ii in 2005; AO(ii) was addressed by AO3; AO(iii) by AO5i; AO(iv) and AO(v) by AO4; and AO(vi) by AO1. The most significant changes between 2000 and 2005, which are indicated in bold text in the table above, were the additional requirements for AO1, AO2ii and AO5ii. For the latter two assessment objectives, the additional requirements reflected the significant change of these being 'stepped', so that greater sophistication of response was expected from candidates at A2 than was required at AS level.

As noted already, a significant difference in provision in the period was that assessment objectives were given specific weightings in 2005 but had not been given weightings in 2000. The level of information in syllabuses regarding assessment objective coverage was therefore more precise in 2005 than in 2000.

The 2000 syllabuses each included a grid indicating the assessment components in which each assessment objective would be addressed. In each syllabus, AOi, AOii, AOv and AOvi were addressed in each component, though OCR placed a greater emphasis on AOii than on the other assessment objectives. There was greater variation between the awarding bodies for AOiii and AOiv: CCEA, Edexcel and OCR addressed these in each component, though OCR placed a greater emphasis upon them in some components than in others; Edexcel addressed them in all components, but not in all sections of these; and WJEC differed notably in that these assessment objectives were not addressed at all in some components.

The 2005 syllabuses provided much more detailed information than those from 2000 regarding assessment objective coverage. This had also been the case when 1999 provision was compared with that from 1995. In each syllabus, each assessment objective was given a weighting for each of AS, A2 and overall A level. CCEA, Edexcel and OCR weighted the assessment objectives equally at each level. AQA placed a greater emphasis at all levels on AO2i and AO2ii and a lesser emphasis on AO5i and AO5ii, while WJEC placed a greater emphasis at AS level (and also at A level) on AO4 and a lesser emphasis on AO5i. In each 2005 syllabus, each assessment objective was targeted in at least three assessment units, and often in all six of these. Assessment objectives were allocated specific weightings for each assessment unit in which they were targeted, and therefore the grids provided in syllabuses illustrating the relationship between assessment objectives and assessment units now included detailed numerical information quantifying this. For example, in terms of A2, AQA Unit 6 was indicated as targeting 9 per cent AO1, 7 per cent AO2ii, 8 per cent AO3, 7 per cent AO4 and 9 per cent AO5ii. Although this approach provided a more detailed allocation than the previous approach, the numerical information was highly specific, and it would be very difficult to achieve the exact ratios anticipated in practice and still harder to maintain consistency over time in question papers and mark schemes.

There was significant variation between the 2005 syllabuses in the assessment objectives targeted in the synoptic units, and therefore in their putative focus. These weightings are summarised in Table 2. The potential for proposed assessment objective coverage to appear arbitrary – based more on achieving numerical balance than on reflecting assessment requirements appropriately – is illustrated by the CCEA example. In this case, AO1 is given a weighting of 0 per cent, despite the overarching nature of its requirements, which would seem relevant to any unit and which candidates would seem certain to demonstrate throughout. (However, this weighting was contradicted elsewhere in the syllabus, and in the question paper rubric).

Table 2: Assessment objective weightings for the synoptic unit, 2005

	AQA	CCEA	Edexcel	OCR	WJEC
AO1	9%	0%	5%	5%	5%
AO2ii	7%	10%	15%	10%	5%
AO3	8%	10%	10%	10%	5%
AO4	7%	10%	5%	5%	5%
AO5ii	9%	10%	5%	10%	20%

The table above illustrates that there was still considerable variation in the ways awarding bodies addressed assessment objectives in the 2005 syllabuses. However, in 2005, awarding bodies made greater overall use of assessment objectives than had been the case in 2000 – using them to structure syllabuses, assessment design, question formulation and mark schemes. This clearer focus on the range of assessment objectives, which had been suggested in the 2001 report, resulted in more transparent schemes of assessment and in greater overall comparability between syllabuses, in line with Recommendation iii of the 1996 report. Reviewers felt, though, that this change in provision had not altered the level of demand significantly. The greater clarity provided by the focus on assessment objectives was balanced by greater expectations for candidates to provide thoughtful and structured responses, often to quite complex and sophisticated prompts.

2.5 Syllabus content

In the 2000 and 2005 syllabuses, the minimum reading requirement was eight texts. These requirements were in line, respectively, with the revised subject core for A level English Literature implemented in 1996 and the Curriculum 2000 A level English Literature subject criteria. (Two exceptions to this were noted in 2000: for WJEC, the requirements were not made explicit and, for CCEA, the minimum requirement was implied as being only six texts.)

Although the 2000 and 2005 syllabuses each required the study of a minimum of eight texts, the degree of prescription regarding these was greater in 2005, where it reflected the change to the AS/A2 structure, than had been the case in 2000. The result had been similar when comparing provision in 1999 with that from 1995. In 2000 it was indicated only that the eight texts studied by candidates must include one Shakespeare play plus one other drama text, one prose text and one poetry text, at least one of which must have been written in the period 1370–1900. The nature of the other four texts to be studied was not specified. The relatively limited extent of these requirements is evident in the fact that the WJEC 2000 syllabus managed to address all of the specific requirements about set texts in a single component. However, in 2005, candidates were required to study four texts at AS, comprising one Shakespeare play plus one other drama text, one prose text and one poetry text, at least one of which should have been written before 1900. They were also required to study four further texts at A2, which must cover prose, poetry and drama, with at least one written before 1770 and a further written before 1900.

Reviewers did have some concerns that the change to a more focused six-unit assessment structure had increased the potential for the texts set overall to be limited in terms of period and genre. It was felt that in the 2005 syllabuses some areas were overrepresented, for example 20th century prose and late 16th/early 17th century drama (through the inclusion of Tudor/Stuart dramatists as well as Shakespeare). Work from the late 17th and 18th centuries was felt to be underrepresented.

However, the 2005 set texts themselves were judged to be entirely appropriate for this level, as were the themes and techniques explored through them. Furthermore, the range of reading required in 2005 was prescribed much more closely in terms of period and genre than had been the case in 2000, and selections of set texts therefore met requirements more explicitly than previously. Owing to their greater focus, the selections were less miscellaneous than those noted in the 2001 report, though the need to offer some flexibility meant that there was still an element of this, albeit within narrower parameters. Overall, these changes to required reading represented a significant move towards meeting Recommendation i of the 1996 report.

The only 2005 syllabus in which an awarding body anthology was offered was Edexcel. This anthology was in two sections, post-1770 poetry and pre-1770 poetry. The two sections were optional texts for Units 1 and 5 of this syllabus, respectively.

2.6 Scheme of assessment

The schemes of assessment for each awarding body in 2000 and 2005 are provided in Appendix D. It is evident that the 2005 schemes of assessment were more focused than those from 2000, with assessment units generally targeting genres in specific periods, rather than adopting a broader or unspecified approach. This greater structuring restricted the potential noted in 2000 for CCEA and OCR of coverage of the specified range of reading being dependent on centres and candidates, rather than being required explicitly through the design of assessments. The change in provision also had significant implications in terms of the nature of the choice available within units regarding genre and period. This is discussed further in Section 2.7.

As can be seen from the schemes of assessment, time allocations for individual units had decreased consistently between 2000 and 2005. This was largely owing to the move to a six-unit qualification structure in line with the Curriculum 2000 reforms. However, where similar assessment routes through syllabuses were compared over the period, overall time allocations remained the same for Edexcel and OCR, and increased for CCEA and WJEC. Although the route taken through a syllabus in 2005 could affect overall time allocations significantly, reviewers felt that these were appropriate, as were the time allocations on a unit level.

It can also be seen from the schemes of assessment that the use of open text examinations decreased significantly in the period – from being the most common type of question paper in 2000 to representing approximately half of those on offer in 2005, with the remainder being closed text. This more even balance of examining modes was a move towards addressing the element of Recommendation iii of the 1996 report regarding the appropriateness of tasks to their form of assessment. However, it was noted that there was some variation in the use made of the examining modes by different awarding bodies. Open text examinations did not always exploit the opportunities provided to candidates through text availability, for example by requiring the type of close textual analysis anticipated in AO3. There was also some variation in the nature of closed text examinations. In some cases (such as CCEA Unit 2) candidates were provided with substantial printed extracts, while in others (such as AQA Unit 4) more general questions, unsupported by such extracts, were posed. The potential for close textual analysis to be undertaken was therefore variable, though overall there was less scope for this in 2005 than in 2000.

Analysis of previously unseen material was more evident in the 2005 syllabuses than in those from 2000. Where required in 2005, it tended to be an element of the synoptic assessment, and this was judged to be appropriate. The 2005 syllabuses each addressed the requirement for synoptic assessment in one unit only, which was in each case the final A2 unit listed in the scheme of assessment. The synoptic assessments are considered further in Section 2.8.

Overall, there was an improvement between 2000 and 2005 in terms of syllabuses offering the coherent assessment strategies mentioned in the 2001 report. However, there were some specific concerns regarding assessments, which are considered in Section 2.8.

2.7 Options

The optional routes for each awarding body in 2000 and 2005 are provided in Appendix D.

It is evident that between 2000 and 2005 the level of choice available within syllabuses on a unit level was fairly comparable. In contrast, the 1999 syllabuses had offered fewer such optional routes compared to those from 1995. The 2005 syllabuses all offered a choice between coursework and an open text examination at A2. The AQA, Edexcel and WJEC syllabuses also offered this choice at AS, though for CCEA and OCR this was not the case since coursework was compulsory. In 2000, CCEA, Edexcel and WJEC had offered a similar level of choice to this (though for CCEA and Edexcel this was through alternative syllabuses rather than alternative routes within the same syllabus). Only for OCR was there a significant change in the period, from 10 optional routes in 2000 to two in 2005.

There was a significant change between 2000 and 2005 in the nature of the choice available within question papers. In each case, where set texts were addressed, a choice was given of text and question. However, the 2005 question papers offered much less choice than those from 2000 in terms of period and genre, as the units were much more period-focused and coverage of the required range of reading was prescribed more closely as a result.

The comparability of coursework and examination routes in the 2005 syllabuses was a concern. Syllabuses indicated that these options targeted the same assessment objectives, and it was appropriate therefore that their mark schemes were either very similar, or identical, in each case. However, these forms of assessment provide candidates with significantly different opportunities. For example, it might be argued that AO2, AO4 and AO5 could be addressed with greater detail and rigour through coursework than by an open text examination; conversely it might be anticipated that an open text examination would focus on AO3, while coursework need not. Consequently it was not necessarily appropriate in terms of comparability within syllabuses that these routes had common targeted assessment objectives. It should be noted that this lack of comparability was evident in the review of candidates' work. In their coursework, candidates did not appear to address targeted assessment objectives as effectively as in their examinations.

There was also an issue regarding comparability between syllabuses in the examinations offered as alternatives to coursework. Considerable variation was evident in the duration of these examinations. For example, at A2 this examination was one hour for Edexcel, but two hours for OCR.

2.8 Question papers

Overall, the accessibility of question papers in 2005 was judged to be appropriate for the full range of candidates at AS and A2. Candidates were required to demonstrate an accurate and detailed knowledge and an informed understanding of the texts they had studied, and so Recommendation ii of the 1996 report was addressed.

Recommendation iv of this report was also addressed since mark schemes were appropriate, clearly indicating expectations regarding writing skills through their targeting of AO1.

As noted in Section 2.4, there was greater overall use of assessment objectives by awarding bodies in 2005 than was the case in 2000. This increased comparability of provision, both within and between syllabuses. Questions now tended to address the requirements of assessment objectives more explicitly, and consequently were more focused and less general than before. The first example below, from 2000, is fairly general in approach, and it is not immediately clear on which assessment objectives it focuses. In the second example, from 2005, the focus is clearly on the assessment objective targeted principally, AO5ii.

(WJEC 2000, Paper 1) 'In what ways does this extract introduce plot, theme and character?'

(WJEC 2005, Unit 6) 'Commentators have observed that the play seems to lack a hero and a convincing plot, but remains a powerful tragedy. Examine this idea, taking account of the literary traditions and values which underpin *The Duchess of Malfi*.'

The requirements of questions were therefore made clearer to candidates in 2005 than in 2000, which addressed part of Recommendation iii from the 1996 report. In some cases the 2005 question papers included the assessment objectives themselves, which marked a clear difference in provision from that in 2000. It was felt that this approach might have proved helpful to candidates, though equally that it might have added to the complexity of the examination. Examiners' reports also emphasised the need to address targeted assessment objectives.

The focus upon assessment objectives meant that requirements of optional questions within papers tended to be comparable, if sometimes rather formulaic. However, some instances were noted where comparability between optional questions was not evident, as these did not appear through their formulation to be addressing the same assessment objectives. This issue was particularly striking for AQA Unit 3 but was noted for other syllabuses.

The 2005 question papers tended to be less open-ended than those from 2000 in terms of the question choice available to candidates. In 2000, candidates were able generally to choose for a given text between a question focused upon a particular extract and one with a more general theme. In 2005, though, candidates were more likely to have to respond to a particular type of question in a given paper or section, rather than have a choice between these. This was noted particularly for CCEA, OCR and WJEC. However, this more prescribed structure was less evident for AQA and Edexcel. AQA tended to offer a question choice comparable to that in 2000 – between a question focused on an extract and one with a more general basis. Edexcel also tended to offer a choice based largely on whether particular extracts were specified in the question. Comparability of routes within question papers was least evident in cases where a choice of question types, with differing requirements, was available to candidates.

Overall, the 2005 syllabuses offered clearer strategies than those from 2000 for ensuring that candidates displayed understanding of parts of texts as well as whole texts. This addressed one of the concerns noted in the 2001 report. Contextual understanding, another issue noted in this report, was also addressed in syllabuses, through AO5. However, this was deemed most effective for the synoptic units, which are discussed further below. There was a concern regarding the tendency at AS for some questions to involve the discussion of context in a limited fashion – the relationship between an extract and its source as a whole. This issue was noted particularly for AQA Unit 3, but was evident for other syllabuses. There was also a concern, noted principally for CCEA, that question rubrics did not always synthesise fully required contextual considerations. A further concern expressed in the 2001 report was that syllabuses had not incorporated critical reading in a satisfactory fashion. In the 2005 syllabuses, a number of question papers targeting AO4 made use of critical quotations or opinions, with candidates required to consider the merits of these in their response. However, with the exception of some examples noted mainly for AQA, these quotations did not tend to demand awareness of critical theory, and therefore prior critical reading was not a requirement as such. The need for critical reading to have been undertaken was most obvious for the synoptic units, where the use of topics provided a clear focus for this.

A greater level of guidance was provided in question papers in 2005 than had been the case in 2000. This guidance was provided generally for AS units, where questions were often more explicit and less abstract, and in some cases indicated content that should be included in responses. The presence of additional guidance, which was judged to be appropriate given the intermediate position of AS between GCSE and A level, was noted mainly for CCEA and OCR, and was less evident for AQA, Edexcel and WJEC. Instances were noted for AQA Unit 3 and WJEC Unit 3 of optional questions having differing levels of guidance, which was not judged to be appropriate. The following are examples of AS questions. The first was considered appropriate owing to the text-specific nature of the guidance. However, the latter two were considered insufficiently helpful, one owing to insufficient guidance and the other to overly simplistic guidance (which essentially was transposed for every question in the paper).

(OCR 2005, Unit 2707) 'How far does Shakespeare make the gaining of self-knowledge a central concern of *As You Like It*? In the course of your answer: explain clearly how two or three characters gain self-knowledge; comment on what the play suggests about the importance of self-knowledge.'

(WJEC 2005, Unit 1) 'By close analysis of the language in this extract, discuss Shakespeare's portrayal of King Lear.'

(CCEA 2005, Unit 1) '*A Man for All Seasons* is a play in which evil triumphs over good. Using the extract given below as a starting point and with reference to other appropriately selected parts of the play, construct an argument in response to the above statement. In your argument, consider the two bullet points given below in coming to your own conclusions:

- reasons for thinking that evil triumphs over good;
- reasons for thinking that evil does not triumph over good.'

The synoptic assessments provided in 2005 addressed AO2ii and AO5ii appropriately. They required candidates to make sustained comparative study of texts, and to consider particular contexts explicitly, whether traditions (such as revenge tragedy) or sociological issues (such as the effect of a work on society's view of a particular group). The synthesis and evaluation required by these tasks was judged to represent a considerable increase in demand in the period. However, there was some variation between syllabuses in the design of synoptic tasks. It was felt that these were most appropriate where a range of period and genre was addressed, and where some analysis of previously unseen material was required of candidates. The use of topics to link texts explicitly, such as was evident for AQA and OCR, was useful, particularly where creative choices were made in these topics, which were not likely to be unduly familiar to candidates.

Generally, the 2005 question papers showed a clear fitness for purpose, measuring candidates' abilities across the range of intellectual skills specified by the assessment objectives. The focus on assessment objectives led to clearer requirements in question papers and increased comparability of provision across awarding bodies. Question papers were also more specific in the types of response required in particular sections. However, there remained some examples of questions that were not comparable in the level of guidance offered or in their focus on the assessment objectives.

2.9 Coursework

In the 2000 syllabuses reviewed, coursework was compulsory for CCEA and Edexcel, but was optional for OCR and WJEC (though in the case of OCR, coursework had to be taken in conjunction with a written paper requiring close textual analysis). In the 2005 syllabuses CCEA and OCR had compulsory coursework units at AS, whereas AQA, Edexcel and WJEC offered a choice at this level between coursework and an examination; at A2 all awarding bodies offered a choice between coursework and an examination. Coursework therefore remained compulsory at CCEA and optional for WJEC, but went from being compulsory to optional at Edexcel and from being optional to compulsory at OCR.

The coursework provision in each syllabus in 2000 and 2005 is detailed in Table 3. As can be seen, the number of units in which coursework could be submitted increased over the period, though there was greater scope overall to opt for an examined alternative. Assuming that candidates submitted the maximum possible amount of coursework for the A level as a whole, the number of words required remained very consistent across the period for each syllabus, though the number of pieces that this could comprise remained the same at CCEA, increased for Edexcel and OCR and decreased for WJEC. Significantly, though, the maximum weighting of coursework increased from 20 per cent in 2000 to 30 per cent in 2005. This figure was consistent across awarding bodies, which had not been the case when comparing 1995 provision with that from 1999.

Table 3: Coursework requirements, 2000 and 2005

Awarding body	2000	2005
AQA	Not considered as part of this review	AS Optional; 15% 2,000 words; 1 piece A2 Optional; 15% 2,500 words; 1 piece
CCEA	A level Compulsory (in the syllabus reviewed); 20% Up to 3,000 words; 1 or 2 pieces	AS Compulsory; 15% 1,500 words; 1 piece A2 Optional; 15% 1,500 words; 1 piece
Edexcel	A level Compulsory (in the syllabus reviewed); 20% 3,000–4,000 words; 1 or 2 pieces	AS Optional; 15% 1,500 words; 1 or 2 pieces A2 Optional; 15% 2,000–2,500 words; 1 or 2 pieces
OCR	A level	AS

	Optional; 20% 3,000–5,000 words; at least 2 pieces	Compulsory; 15% 1,500–2,000 words (max. 3,000); 2 pieces A2 Optional; 15% Up to 3,000 words; 1 or 2 pieces
WJEC	A level Optional; 20% 3,000–4,000 words; 2–4 pieces	AS Optional; 15% 1,500–2,000 words; 1 piece A2 Optional; 15% 2,000 words; 1 piece

The 2005 syllabuses provided significantly more information regarding coursework than had been the case in 2000. Where the 2005 syllabuses offered a choice between coursework and examination routes, coursework was the more popular option, though the extent of the difference in popularity varied considerably between syllabuses.

2.10 Summary

The A level English Literature assessment objectives were fairly similar in 2005 to 2000 in terms of their requirements. The main changes in the period were the ‘stepping’ of some assessment objectives to reflect the difference in AS and A2 assessments, and the allocation of numerical weightings to assessment objectives. These weightings were very detailed, being provided on a qualification and unit level, but it was judged that the level of specificity would be difficult to achieve in practice. The greater use in 2005 of assessment objectives to structure syllabuses and question papers resulted in greater overall transparency and comparability of provision.

The minimum number of texts required by the subject criteria was the same in 2005 as it had been in 2000, though there was a greater level of prescription in 2005 regarding the genres and periods that these must address. In line with this, schemes of assessment from 2005 were more focused than those from 2000, with units tending to address genres in specific periods. Consequently, assessments and their set texts met requirements more explicitly in 2005 than had been the case in 2000, though their focused nature had the potential to limit the areas that might be addressed.

The level of choice within syllabuses was fairly comparable between 2000 and 2005, with each syllabus offering in at least one unit the choice between coursework and an examination. However, there was a concern that these routes were not sufficiently comparable. Although they targeted the same assessment objectives in each case, coursework and examinations differ considerably in the nature of the opportunities provided for candidates to demonstrate their ability.

The question papers from 2005 were comparable to those from 2000 in terms of their overall durations. However, the proportion that were open text decreased considerably over the period. Consequently, there was less scope in 2005 for candidates to produce close textual analysis. Analysis of previously unseen material was required, typically as part of the synoptic assessment, which was appropriate. Owing to the more focused nature of the units in 2005, question papers offered less choice to candidates in terms of period and genre than had been the case in 2000. Question papers continued to offer some choice of text and question, and comparability was most evident where the choice available was between questions with similar requirements. The greater focus on assessment objectives in 2005 meant that questions tended overall to be comparable, though equally there was potential for them to be rather formulaic in their composition. The synoptic assessments were largely appropriate, though these were most suitable where a range of period and genre was addressed. While these were effective in targeting contextual understanding, this was less evident for other units.

Overall, it was judged that the recommendations from the 1996 report had been met in the 2005 syllabuses.

Section 3: Standards of performance

3.1 Introduction

Reviewers considered candidates' work from all of the awarding bodies in 2000 (again with the exception of AQA) and 2005. Further details of the materials used are provided in Appendix B.

3.2 Review of performance descriptions

The reviewers considered QCA's published AS and A2 performance descriptions for GCE English Literature in the light of candidate work reviewed. Reviewers were invited to comment where, for whatever reason, candidates' work did not match the performance descriptions. This included cases where candidates' work showed evidence of additional features of performance not mentioned in the performance descriptions. On some occasions, candidates' work did not match the performance description because candidates failed to demonstrate a particular feature that was tested. On other occasions, performance did not match the description because the question papers did not require candidates to demonstrate a particular feature. Where the reviewers identified aspects of candidates' work that did not match the performance descriptions in some way, these features are highlighted in bold and discussed in the comment that follows.

3.3 AS grade A performance description

AS grade A performance description

Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2i	Assessment Objective 3	Assessment objective 4	Assessment objective 5i
<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <p>communicate clearly the knowledge, understanding and insight appropriate to literary study, using appropriate terminology and accurate and coherent written expression.</p>	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <p>respond with knowledge and understanding to literary texts of different types and periods.</p>	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <p>show detailed understanding of the ways in which writers' choices of form, structure and language shape meanings.</p>	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <p>articulate independent opinions and judgements, informed by different interpretations of literary texts by other readers.</p>	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <p>show understanding of the contexts in which literary texts are written and understood.</p>
Candidates characteristically:	Candidates characteristically:	Candidates characteristically:	Candidates characteristically:	Candidates characteristically:

<p>a. communicate sound knowledge of literary texts and ways of reading them</p> <p>b. present well organised lines of argument, using relevant examples to support conclusions</p> <p>c. write accurately and clearly, informed by the use of appropriate terminology.</p>	<p>a. respond to texts of different types and periods, showing broadly based knowledge and understanding</p> <p>b. identify accurately and comment appropriately on key characteristics of different genres.</p>	<p>a. identify relevant aspects of writers' choices of form, structure and language</p> <p>b. explore how some significant details shape meaning</p> <p>c. support their response with appropriate textual analysis.</p>	<p>a. offer an informed opinion or judgement based on their own reading of a text</p> <p>b. engage with the viewpoints expressed in different readings of texts.</p>	<p>a. show perceptive understanding of relevant contexts</p> <p>b. draw on appropriate contextual knowledge to illuminate their readings of texts.</p>
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3.4 Comment on AS grade A performance description

Candidates generally met all aspects of the performance descriptions. In AO1, their performance was better than expected in their intelligent application of literary terminology and sophisticated writing skills. In AO4, candidates also were able to use others' views to support and develop their own opinions. Conversely, in AO3, they were less confident in their treatment of literary structure. In some cases this was the result of limited opportunity in syllabuses. In AO5i, while candidates showed understanding of contextual elements and their contribution to the overall effect of a text and a developing awareness of audience, there was less evidence of them drawing on appropriate contextual knowledge to illuminate their readings of texts.

3.5 Performance at the AS grade A boundary

Standards of performance were broadly comparable across the awarding bodies at this grade boundary with the exception of CCEA candidates, who tended to demonstrate slightly weaker performance. Reviewers commented that the performance of CCEA candidates was often less consistent, with weaker close analysis and comment on texts, and less sophisticated written expression.

3.6 AS grade E performance description

AS grade E performance description

Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2i	Assessment Objective 3	Assessment objective 4	Assessment objective 5i
<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <p>communicate clearly the knowledge, understanding and insight appropriate to literary study, using appropriate terminology and accurate and coherent written expression.</p>	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <p>respond with knowledge and understanding to literary texts of different types and periods.</p>	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <p>show detailed understanding of the ways in which writers' choices of form, structure and language shape meanings.</p>	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <p>articulate independent opinions and judgements, informed by different interpretations of literary texts by other readers.</p>	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <p>show understanding of the contexts in which literary texts are written and understood.</p>
Candidates characteristically:	Candidates characteristically:	Candidates characteristically:	Candidates characteristically:	Candidates characteristically:

<p>a. communicate some relevant knowledge of literary texts</p> <p>b. narrate and describe with some organization</p> <p>c. write mostly accurately, using straightforward language and some simple literary terms.</p>	<p>a. respond to texts of different types and periods showing a basic knowledge and understanding</p> <p>b. identify and comment on some features of different genres.</p>	<p>a. identify some aspects of form, structure and language</p> <p>b. comment on some details and their meaning</p> <p>c. make some reference to texts to support their responses.</p>	<p>a. offer a basic opinion or judgement based on their own reading of a text</p> <p>b. show a limited awareness of alternative readings.</p>	<p>a. show some limited understanding of contextual factors</p> <p>b. make some attempts to relate their reading of a text to its context.</p>
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3.7 Comment on the AS grade E performance description

Candidates generally met all aspects of the performance description. However, in AO5i, relevant knowledge tended to be generalised and treated as separate from the text in question.

3.8 Performance at AS grade E boundary

Performance at this grade boundary varied across the awarding bodies. Edexcel and OCR candidates tended to perform better in terms of the quality of their written expression, which was more fluent and assured. They also showed a better grasp of literary features and their responses were more analytical, with better development of critical arguments. WJEC candidates demonstrated weaker performance than candidates from the other awarding bodies. Reviewers commented in particular on the weak written expression of WJEC candidates. Their performance also tended to be less clearly focused on the key issues and to show less detailed engagement with texts.

3.9 A2 grade A performance description

A2 grade A performance description

Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2ii	Assessment Objective 3	Assessment objective 4	Assessment objective 5ii
Candidates should be able to: communicate clearly the knowledge, understanding and insight appropriate to literary study, using appropriate terminology and accurate and coherent 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 writers' choices of form, structure and language shape meanings.	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: evaluate the significance of cultural, historical and other contextual influences on literary texts and study.
Candidates characteristically:	Candidates characteristically:	Candidates characteristically:	Candidates characteristically:	Candidates characteristically:

<p>a. communicate sound knowledge of literary texts and ways of reading them</p> <p>b. sustain well-organised and coherent arguments, supported by effectively chosen examples drawing conclusions</p> <p>c. write accurately and clearly using appropriate</p>	<p>a. respond with a secure knowledge and understanding of texts, based on a clear grasp of genre and period</p> <p>b. explore and reflect on significant similarities and contrasts between texts.</p>	<p>a. identify significant aspects of writers' choices of form, structure and language</p> <p>b. explore in detail how these aspects create meaning</p> <p>c. support their response with appropriate textual analysis.</p>	<p>a. develop an informed argument in response to their own reading of a text</p> <p>b. engage sensitively and critically with the viewpoints expressed in other interpretations.</p>	<p>a. explore and comment on the significance of the relationships between texts and their contexts</p> <p>b. evaluate the influence of contextual factors on the readings of texts.</p>
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terminology and literary register.				
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3.10 Comment on the A2 grade A performance description

Candidates generally met all aspects of the performance description. For AO1, they exceeded it, demonstrating secure knowledge of the texts and an ability to conceptualise and adopt an evaluative approach in their construction of sustained, supported argument. They also wrote in an appropriately clear, direct literary style, using technical terminology with confidence and accuracy. Similarly, for AO4, they offered genuinely personal responses and demonstrated awareness of and engagement with alternative readings of a text. Tightly organised debating skills led to cogent and coherent arguments in support of the preferred interpretation. However, candidates' demonstration of AO5ii was limited to an awareness of the contextual framing of a text with some evaluation of the influence such factors might have.

3.11 Performance at A level grade A

Standards of performance at this grade boundary were broadly comparable across the awarding bodies.

3.12 A2 grade E performance description

A2 grade E performance description

Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2ii	Assessment Objective 3	Assessment objective 4	Assessment objective 5ii
<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <p>communicate clearly the knowledge, understanding and insight appropriate to literary study, using appropriate terminology and accurate and coherent written expression.</p>	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <p>respond with knowledge and understanding to literary texts of different types and periods, exploring and commenting on relationships and comparisons between literary texts.</p>	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <p>show detailed understanding of the ways in which writers' choices of form, structure and language shape meanings.</p>	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <p>articulate independent opinions and judgements, informed by different interpretations of literary texts by other readers.</p>	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <p>evaluate the significance of cultural, historical and other contextual influences on literary texts and study.</p>

<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a. communicate basic knowledge of literary texts and ways of reading them</p> <p>b. convey basic ideas in an ordered way, sometimes supported with examples</p> <p>c. write mostly accurately, using some terminology</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a. respond with some knowledge and understanding of content of texts, making occasional reference to genre and period</p> <p>b. comment on straightforward similarities and contrasts between</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a. identify some aspects of writers' choices of form, structure and language</p> <p>b. describe some details with reference to meaning</p> <p>c. make some appropriate textual references to support their responses.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a. offer a simple opinion or judgement in response to their own reading of a text</p> <p>b. show awareness of the difference between their own and other readings.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a. comment on some of the relationships between texts and contexts</p> <p>b. suggest some ways in which contextual factors influence the reading of texts.</p>
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appropriate to literary study.	texts.			
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3.13 Comment on the A2 grade E performance description

Candidates generally met all aspects of the performance description. However, for AO5ii, candidates tended to regard contextual information as knowledge separate from the experience of the text. It was therefore rarely integrated into a coherent view of the work in question.

3.14 Performance at A level grade E

Standards of performance were comparable between AQA, OCR and WJEC. Edexcel candidates demonstrated slightly stronger performance. Reviewers commented that they tended to focus more clearly on the question and to make more sustained attempts at discussion and analysis in their responses. CCEA candidates tended to be slightly weaker than those from other awarding bodies. Reviewers found that their responses were often very narrative, lacking focus on the question, and were often hampered by poor organisation and written expression.

3.15 Standards of performance over time

A level grade A

Standards of performance were found to be very consistent between 2000 and 2005 within all awarding bodies.

A level grade E

Overall, standards of performance at grade E were maintained between 2000 and 2005. However, there were some variations within awarding bodies. In particular Edexcel candidates were judged on all occasions to have performed better in 2005. This is consistent with the findings across the awarding bodies in 2005. Reviewers commented that Edexcel candidates in 2005 demonstrated more sustained focus on the question and better textual references. Their written expression also tended to be stronger and they were better at shaping an argument.

3.16 Summary

The performance of candidates across awarding bodies in 2005 was comparable at A level grade A. Performance at AS grade A was also comparable, except that CCEA candidates demonstrated slightly weaker performance than those from other awarding bodies. At A level grade E, Edexcel candidates demonstrated slightly stronger performance than those from other awarding bodies, while CCEA candidates demonstrated slightly weaker performance at this grade. The performance of candidates across awarding bodies was least comparable at AS grade E, where WJEC candidates demonstrated weaker performance than those from other awarding bodies, though Edexcel and OCR candidates performed better in comparison.

Between 2000 and 2005 it was found that standards of performance within all awarding bodies had been maintained at A level grade A. Standards of performance at A level grade E within awarding bodies were maintained but were slightly less comparable overall, and in particular candidate performance was consistently stronger in 2005 than in 2000 for Edexcel.

In most cases, candidates met the performance descriptions. At grade A, both at AS and A2, they exceeded them in AO1 and AO4. Conversely, in AO5 for all levels of performance, information about period and context tended to be regarded as supplementary to the other comments being made. So far, neither teaching nor assessment seems to have developed successful strategies for fully encouraging and accessing performance in this assessment objective.

Appendix A

Details of A level syllabuses reviewed

Year	Awarding Body and Syllabus				
	AQA	CCEA	Edexcel	OCR	WJEC
2000	N/A	A31	9171	9000	001401 / 001402
2005	5741 / 6741	S5110 / A5110	8180 / 9180	3828 / 7828	041080 / 006890

Appendix B

Details of A level scripts reviewed

Awarding body	AQA		CCEA		Edexcel		OCR		WJEC	
Year	2000	2005	2000	2005	2000	2005	2000	2005	2000	2005
AS		A 10		A 5		A 10		A 10		A 10
		E 10		E 5		E 5		E 10		E 10
A level	N/A	A 10	A 10	A 5	A 8	A 10	A 10	A 10	A 10	A 5
	N/A	E 10	E 10	E 3	E 8	E 5	E 9	E 5	E 10	E 5

Appendix C

List of reviewers

Review team	
Coordinator	Tom Banks
Syllabus reviewers	Campbell Cassidy (SQA) Anthony Glachan Alison Woollard
Script reviewers	Cary Archard (WJEC) Adrian Beard (AQA) Caroline Bentley-Davies Peter Doughty (OCR) Jean Dourneen John Hodgson (NATE) Richard Hoyes (Edexcel) David Kirkham (OCR) Robin Marsh (CCEA) Stephen Purcell (WJEC) Tom Rank (AQA) Margaret Walker (Edexcel)

Note: where a participant was nominated by a particular organisation, the nominating body is shown in parentheses after their name.

Appendix D: Schemes of assessment 2000 and 2005

AQA 2000	AQA 2005
Not considered as part of this review	<p>AS</p> <p>1 – The Modern Novel (15%; 1 hour; closed text)</p> <p>Five modern prose texts with two questions on each; candidates answer one question</p> <p>2 – Shakespeare (15%; coursework)</p> <p>Candidates produce 2,000 words. This must consist of one piece. The work may address any one Shakespeare play, except for those prescribed for Unit 4</p> <p>OR</p> <p>2 – Shakespeare (15%; 1 hour; open text)</p> <p>Three Shakespeare plays with two questions on each; candidates answer one question</p> <p>3 – Texts in Context (20%; 2 hours; open text)</p> <p>Section A: six drama texts from different periods with two questions on each; candidates answer one question. Section B: six poetry texts from different periods with two questions on each; candidates answer one question (NB they must address one pre- and one post-1900 text in their answers for the</p>

	<p>paper as a whole)</p> <p>A2</p> <p>4 – Texts in Time (15%; 2 hours; closed text)</p> <p>Section A: six pre-1770 drama texts with two questions on each; candidates answer one question. Section B: four pre-1900 poetry texts with two questions on each; candidates answer one question</p> <p>5 – Literary Connections (15%; coursework)</p> <p>Candidates produce 2,500 words. This must consist of one piece. The work should compare any two texts, one of which must be prose, and both of which are not prescribed for any other units</p> <p>OR</p> <p>5 – Literary Connections (15%; 1½ hours; open text)</p> <p>Three possible areas of study, each containing two options; each option involves comparing two texts (one of which will be prose); two questions on each option; candidates answer one question</p> <p>6 – Reading for Meaning (20%; 3 hours; closed text)</p> <p>Candidates answer one comparative question with reference to poetry, prose and drama; some of the material will be pre-1900</p>
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	<p>Total examining time:</p> <p>8 hours with AS and A2 coursework;</p> <p>9½ hours with AS coursework and A2 exam;</p> <p>9 hours with AS exam and A2 coursework;</p> <p>10½ hours with AS and A2 exam options</p>
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CCEA 2000	CCEA 2005
A level	AS
	1 – The Study of Poetry Written After

<p>1 – Poetry (26.6%; 2 hours; open text)</p> <p>10 poetry texts from different periods with two questions on each; candidates answer two questions, each on a different text</p> <p>2 – Prose (26.6%; 2 hours; open text)</p> <p>10 prose texts from different periods with two questions on each; candidates answer two questions, each on a different text</p> <p>3 – Drama (26.6%; 2 hours; open text)</p> <p>Section A: two Shakespeare plays with two questions on each; candidates answer one question. Section B: eight drama texts from different periods with two questions on each; candidates answer one question</p> <p>Coursework (20%)</p> <p>Candidates produce up to 3,000 words. This may consist of one or two pieces. Set texts from the other components may not be the main focus, but otherwise there is a choice of period and genre. If one piece is submitted, this should relate to at least two texts. If two pieces are submitted, these may comprise:</p>	<p>1800 and The Study of 20th Century Dramatists (20%; 2 hours; open text)</p> <p>Section A: seven post-1800 poetry texts with two questions on each; candidates answer one question. Section B: seven 20th century drama texts with two questions on each; candidates answer one question</p> <p>2 – The Study of Shakespeare (15%; 1 hour; closed text)</p> <p>Five Shakespeare plays with two questions on each; candidates answer one question</p> <p>3 – The Study of Prose Written Before 1900 (15%; Coursework)</p> <p>Candidates produce 1,500 words. This must consist of one piece. The work should address at least one text in terms of the chosen 'literary genre'. The text may be from the 24 prescribed, or be an approved alternative</p> <p>A2</p> <p>4 – Response to Unseen Poetry and The Study of Poetry Written Before 1770</p>
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<p>consideration of at least two texts; or consideration of one text and a piece of creative writing accompanied by a critical commentary</p> <p>Total examining time:</p> <p>6 hours</p>	<p>(15%; 2½ hours; closed text)</p> <p>Section A: one compulsory question on previously unseen poetry. Section B: four pre-1770 poetry texts with two questions on each; candidates answer one question</p> <p>5 – The Study of Twentieth Century Prose (15%; coursework)</p> <p>Candidates produce 1,500 words. This must consist of one piece. The work should address at least one text from the 11 prescribed for the written paper</p> <p>OR</p> <p>5 – The Study of Twentieth Century Prose (15%; 1 hour 10 minutes; open text)</p> <p>11 20th century prose texts with two questions on each; candidates answer one question</p> <p>6 – Drama (20%; 2 hours; open text)</p> <p>Three prescribed pairs of drama texts from different periods with one comparative question on each; candidates answer one question</p>
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	Total examining time: 7½ hours with A2 coursework; 8 hours 40 minutes with A2 exam
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Edexcel 2000	Edexcel 2005
<p>A level</p> <p>1 – Shakespeare and Other Dramatists (20%; 2 hours; open text)</p> <p>Section A: four Shakespeare plays with two questions on each; candidates answer one question. Section B: six drama texts from different periods with two questions on each; candidates answer one question</p> <p>2 – Prose (30%; 3 hours; open text)</p> <p>Section A: one compulsory question relating to a previously unseen prose text. Section B: six pre-1900 prose texts with two questions on each; candidates must answer one question and may answer one additional question. Section C: six post-1900 prose texts with two questions on each; candidates may answer one question</p> <p>3 – Coursework (20%)</p> <p>Candidates produce 3,000–4,000 words. This may consist of one or two pieces. The work should involve consideration of at least two texts. Set texts from the other components may not be addressed, but otherwise there is a choice of period and genre. If two pieces are submitted, one of these may be a personal composition, accompanied by a critical commentary</p>	<p>AS</p> <p>1 – Drama and Poetry (20%; 2 hours; open text)</p> <p>Section A: five drama texts from different periods with two questions on each; candidates answer one question. Section B: five poetry texts from different periods (one of which is the Edexcel anthology) with two questions on each; candidates answer one question</p> <p>2 – Pre-1900 Prose (15%; 1 hour; closed text)</p> <p>Five pre-1900 prose texts with two questions on each; candidates answer one question</p> <p>3 – Shakespeare in Context (15%; coursework)</p> <p>Candidates produce 1,500 words. This may consist of one or two pieces. The work should address one text from the five prescribed for the written paper. If two pieces are submitted, one of these may be a personal composition, accompanied by a critical commentary</p> <p>OR</p> <p>3 – Shakespeare in Context (15%; 1 hour;</p>

<p>4 – Poetry (30%; 3 hours; open text)</p> <p>Section A: two previously unseen poetry texts, with one question on each; candidates answer one question. Section B: 10 poetry texts from different periods, with two questions on each; candidates answer two questions, each on a different text</p> <p>Total examining time: 8 hours</p>	<p>open text)</p> <p>Five Shakespeare plays with two questions on each; candidates answer one question</p> <p>A2</p> <p>4 – Modern Prose (15%; coursework)</p> <p>Candidates produce 2,000–2,500 words. This may consist of one or two pieces. The work should address one text, excluding those prescribed for Unit 6. If two pieces are submitted, one of these may be a personal composition, accompanied by a critical commentary</p> <p>OR</p> <p>4 – Modern Prose (15%; 1 hour; open text)</p> <p>Six post-1900 prose texts with two questions on each; candidates answer one question</p> <p>5 – Poetry and Drama (15%; 2 hours; open text)</p> <p>Section A: six pre-1770 poetry texts (one of which is the Edexcel anthology) with two questions on each. Section B: six post-1770 poetry texts with two questions on each. Section C: five pre-1770 drama texts with two questions on each. Section D: five post-1770 drama texts with two questions on each. Candidates must answer one question on poetry and one on drama, and</p>
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	<p>must refer to at least one pre-1770 text</p> <p>6 – Criticism and Comparison (20%; 2 hours; closed text)</p> <p>Section A: one question on previously unseen poetry or prose. Section B: six areas of study relating to poetry, prose and drama, with three texts for each; candidates produce one comparative study of two texts (they must refer to a pre-1900 text; one text is compulsory for each study, the others are optional)</p> <p>Total examining time:</p> <p>7 hours with AS and A2 coursework; 8 hours with AS coursework and A2 exam; 8 hours with AS exam and A2 coursework; 9 hours with AS and A2 exam options</p>
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OCR 2000	OCR 2005
<p>A level</p> <p>1 – Shakespeare and Other Authors (33.3%; 3 hours; open text)</p> <p>Section A: four Shakespeare texts with three questions on each; candidates must answer one question and may answer one additional question. Section B: eight pre-1900 set texts (two drama, two prose, four poetry) with three questions on each; candidates must answer one question and may answer one additional question</p> <p><i>And any two of:</i></p> <p>2 – <i>Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Writing</i> (33.3%; 3 hours; closed text)</p> <p>11 texts from the period 1700–1900 (two drama, six prose, three poetry) with two questions on each; candidates answer three questions, each on a different text</p> <p>3 – Twentieth Century Writing (33.3%; 3 hours; closed text)</p> <p>11 post-1900 texts (three drama, five</p>	<p>AS</p> <p>2707 – Drama: Shakespeare (15%; 1½ hours; closed text)</p> <p>Section A: four Shakespeare plays with one passage-based question on each; candidates answer one question. Section B: four Shakespeare plays with two essay questions on each; candidates answer one question. Candidates must answer on the same play in each section</p> <p>2708 – Poetry and Prose (20%; 1½ hours; open text)</p> <p>Section A: eight poetry texts with two questions on each; candidates answer one question. Section B: eight prose texts with two questions on each; candidates answer one question (NB they must address a pre-1900 text in at least one of their responses for the paper as a whole)</p> <p>2709 – Literature Complementary Study (15%; Coursework)</p> <p>Candidates produce 1,500–2,000 words (up to a maximum of 3,000). This must</p>

<p>prose, three poetry) with two questions on each; candidates answer three questions, each on a different text</p> <p>4 – Topic Paper (33.3%; 3 hours; open text)</p> <p>Six topic areas with three questions on each; candidates answer two questions (one extract-based and one general)</p> <p>5 – Open Texts (33.3%; 3 hours; open text)</p> <p>9 texts (three drama, three prose, three poetry) with two questions on each; candidates answer three questions, each on a different text</p> <p>6 – Coursework (20%) <u>and</u> 7 – Comment and Appreciation (13.3%; 1 hour)</p> <p>CWK: candidates produce 3,000–5,000 words. This must consist of at least two pieces. The work should involve consideration of at least two texts. There is a choice of period and genre, and one of the texts may be one studied for another component. 7: 11 set texts (four drama, four prose, three poetry) with one question on each; candidates answer one question</p>	<p>consist of two pieces. The work should address any one text, except for those prescribed for the other units. One piece should address the text as a whole, and one focus on an extract</p> <p>A2</p> <p>2710 – Poetry and Drama pre-1900 (15%; 2 hours; closed text)</p> <p>Section A: six poetry texts with two questions on each; candidates answer one question. Section B: six drama texts with two questions on each; candidates answer one question (NB they must address a pre-1770 text in at least one of their responses for the paper as a whole)</p> <p>2711 – Prose post-1914 (15%; coursework)</p> <p>Candidates produce up to 3,000 words. This may consist of one or two pieces. The work should address one or more texts, except for those prescribed for the other units</p> <p>OR</p> <p>2712 – Prose post-1914 (15%; 2 hours; open text)</p> <p>Section A: eight prose texts with one</p>
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<p>Total examining time:</p> <p>7 hours with coursework option;</p> <p>9 hours with exam options</p>	<p>passage-based question on each; candidates answer one question (NB they are required to choose the passages). Section B: eight prose texts with two essay questions on each; candidates answer one question</p> <p>2713 – Comparative and Contextual Study (20%; 2 hours; closed text)</p> <p>Section A: six topics with one passage-based question on each; candidates answer one question discussing prose, poetry or drama. Section B: six topics with three essay questions on each; candidates answer one question discussing prose, poetry or drama. Candidates must answer on the same topic in each section</p> <p>Total examining time:</p> <p>7 hours with A2 coursework;</p> <p>9 hours with A2 exam</p>
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WJEC 2000	WJEC 2005
<p>A level</p> <p>Paper 1 (40%; 3 hours; open text)</p> <p>Section A: two Shakespeare plays with three questions on each; candidates answer one question. Section B: three poetry texts from different periods with three questions on each; candidates answer one question. Section C: three prose texts from different periods with three questions on each; candidates answer one question. Section D: three drama texts from different periods with three questions on each; candidates answer one question. (For one section, each of the three texts available will be pre-1900)</p> <p>Paper 2 (40%; 3 hours; open text)</p> <p>20 texts, from different periods and covering drama, prose and poetry, with two questions on each; candidates answer four questions</p> <p>And either:</p>	<p>AS</p> <p>1 – Shakespeare (15%; 1 hour; closed text)</p> <p>Three Shakespeare plays with two questions on each; candidates answer one question</p> <p>2 – Choice of Texts (15%; coursework)</p> <p>Candidates produce 1,500–2,000 words. This must consist of one piece. The work should address any one approved text</p> <p>OR</p> <p>2 – Choice of Texts (15%; 1½ hours; open text)</p> <p>Six texts, from different periods and covering poetry, prose and drama, with two questions on each; candidates answer one question</p> <p>3 – Poetry (20th Century) & Prose (pre-1900) (20%; 2 hours; open text)</p> <p>Section A: five 20th-century poetry texts with two questions on each; candidates answer one question. Section B: five pre-</p>

<p>Paper 3 (20%; 2½ hours; open text)</p> <p>Three previously unseen texts, from different periods and covering drama, prose and poetry, with one question on each; candidates answer two questions</p> <p>Coursework (20%)</p> <p>Candidates produce 3,000–4,000 words. This may consist of four ‘standard’ pieces, two ‘extended’ pieces, or two ‘standard’ pieces and one ‘extended’ piece. The work may involve textual study and/or personal writing. For textual study, set texts from the other components may not be addressed; otherwise there is a choice of period and genre, though no more than half of the work as a whole should focus on a single text. For personal writing, no more than half of the work as a whole should involve work in a single genre</p> <p>Total examining time:</p> <p>6 hours with coursework option;</p> <p>8½ hours with exam option</p>	<p>1900 prose texts with two questions on each; candidates answer one question</p> <p>A2</p> <p>4 – Poetry (pre-1900) (15%; 1¼ hours; open text)</p> <p>Six pre-1900 poetry texts with two questions on each; candidates answer one question</p> <p>5 – Comparison between Texts (15%; coursework)</p> <p>Candidates produce 2,000 words. This must consist of one piece. The work should address any two texts, though one of these must be prose</p> <p>OR</p> <p>5 – Comparison between Texts (15%; 1½ hours; open text)</p> <p>Six pairs of texts, from different periods but all of which are prose, with two questions on each; candidates answer one comparative question</p> <p>6 – Drama pre-1770 & Linked Material (20%; 2½ hours; closed text)</p>
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	<p>Four pre-1770 drama texts with three questions on each; candidates must answer two questions, one on the chosen text, and one comparing this with a previously unseen extract</p> <p>Total examining time:</p> <p>6¾ hours with AS and A2 coursework;</p> <p>8¼ hours with AS coursework and A2 exam;</p> <p>8¼ hours with AS exam and A2 coursework;</p> <p>9¾ hours with AS and A2 exam options</p>
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