

## A-level ENGLISH LITERATURE B

Paper 2B Texts and genres: Elements of political and social protest writing

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Time allowed: 3 hours

### Materials

For this paper you must have:

- an AQA 12-page answer book
- a copy of the set text(s) you have studied for Section B and Section C. These texts must **not** be annotated and must **not** contain additional notes or materials.

### Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The **Paper Reference** is 7717/2B.
- You must answer the question in Section A, **one** question from Section B and **one** question from Section C. Over Section B and Section C you must write about **three** texts: **one** poetry text, **one** post-2000 prose text and **one** further text. At least **one** of your texts must be written pre-1900.
- Do all rough work in the answer book. Cross through any work you do not want to be marked.

### Information

- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 75.
- You will be marked on your ability to:
  - use good English
  - organise information clearly
  - use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.
- In your response you need to:
  - analyse carefully the writers' methods
  - explore the contexts of the texts you are writing about
  - explore connections across the texts you have studied
  - explore different interpretations of your texts.

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**Section A**

Answer the question in this section.

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Explore the significance of the elements of political and social protest writing in this extract.

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed analysis of the ways the author has shaped meanings.

**[25 marks]**

This extract is taken from the satirical novel *Perfidious Albion* by Sam Byers (2018). The novel is set in England in the near future. Darkin is an old man living on his own in a flat on a run-down estate. Jones works for a company called Downton which now owns the estate and wants to demolish it for a new development.

The knock that rang out through the smoke and the fug of Darkin's living room on this particular day was not, it had to be said, particularly polite. It was sharp, insistent, pointedly excessive. He debated not answering it. His head was full of worrisome scenarios, most of which he'd picked up from *The Record*. He pictured himself opening the door a crack, peering round, only for it to be forced back in his face, knocking him to the floor. Men in balaclavas would burst in. Their voices would be Polish or black.

Further clarification, shouted through the door in a kind of stand-off during which Darkin refused to co-operate until he knew who he was speaking to, yielded no reassurance. The man's name was Jones. He worked for Downton. When Darkin opened the door, slightly out of breath after shuffling over with his stick, Jones stepped straight in, looking not at Darkin but at the flat, his lips and nostrils registering his response.

'It can be hard to keep up with a place,' he said.

Jones's suit was deep blue with an oil-on-water shimmer. He looked long and hard at Darkin's twin sofas before perching himself with some discomfort on the outer lip of the one opposite Darkin's habitual spot.

Darkin didn't say anything. He hadn't liked the man when he'd heard him through the door, and he liked him even less now that he was addressing him in person. He sat down opposite Jones and reached for his fag packet. Kitchen timer be damned, he thought. These were exceptional circumstances.

'I'm afraid I'm going to have to ask you not to smoke, Mr Darkin.'

'It's my flat.'

'But for the moment it's also my place of work.'

Darkin lifted his fingers from the fag packet and picked up what was left of his tea. It was stone cold, but he wanted something to do with his hands.

'What do you want?' he said.

'I could ask you the same question,' said Jones. 'What do you want, Mr Darkin? May I call you Alfred?'

'No. What do you mean what do I want?'

'I mean: what do you want from life? If I could wave a magic wand, what would you ask for?'

'Can you wave a magic wand?'

'You'd be surprised what I can do.'

'I doubt that.'

Mr Jones smiled politely.

'How old are you now, Mr Darkin?'

'Old enough.'

'And your health is none too good, is it?'

'Nothing wrong with me that a few spare parts wouldn't fix.'

'Indeed.' Mr Jones paused. He looked as if he might be about to recline on the sofa but then thought better of it and leaned forward, interlacing his fingers between his knees. 'We take our more senior residents very seriously, you know.'

'Good to hear.'

'Every now and then, we like to pop round and check on our vulnerable adults.'

Darkin had heard the term vulnerable adult before, applied to Flo. Nothing good had come of it.

'I'm not vulnerable,' he said. 'So you don't have to worry.'

'Oh, but you are, Mr Darkin. You're very vulnerable.' Mr Jones looked around pointedly. 'Do you know what I see when I look around here? Hazards. Hundreds of hazards. Trip hazards, fire hazards. Do you think you'd survive a fall, Mr Darkin? In this place, I mean? Because there's so much to knock against on the way down, isn't there? Look at that table. Catch the corner of that and there'd be no helping you.'

'I've survived so far.'

'What I'm saying is, you manage now, but for how long?'

When Darkin didn't answer, Mr Jones pressed on.

'Anyway, like I say, I just wanted to assure you that you're listed on our system. That way, we can respond appropriately if anything happens. Obviously, as one of our owner-occupying tenants who has not signed up to our maintenance programme, you don't rely on us to do your repairs. But as I'm sure you understand, we're still responsible for all sorts of things that your wellbeing might depend on. If your gas or electricity supply was interrupted and you were unable to cook or heat the home, for example, a gentleman as frail as yourself could become ill very quickly. Just the same as if there was a carbon monoxide leak, you'd be far more likely to succumb to the fumes before you could exit the property. It's very important we know these things, Mr Darkin, so we can keep you safe. Of course, if you ever began to feel that a different property would be more suited to your needs, we'd be only too happy to—'

'I'm fine here.'

'Of course you are, Mr Darkin. Of course you are. I'm just saying if—'

'You won't get me out.'

'No-one wants to get you out, Mr Darkin. We just want to help you.'

Darkin nodded. Mr Jones stood up and ran his hands quickly down the buttocks of his suit before giving the palms a quick glance.

'I'll be going,' he said. 'Just remember, we're here if you need us.'

He held out his hand for Darkin to shake. 'Don't get up. I can see myself out.'

Darkin did not initially shake Mr Jones's hand. He didn't want to shake it and didn't see why he should. But Mr Jones didn't let his hand drop. He just held it there, in front of Darkin's face, smiling gently, not moving, until eventually Darkin shook it just to get rid of him. The moment their hands touched, Jones's thin smile both broadened and softened, becoming genuine, toothy.

'No-one holds out forever,' he said. He reached down with his left hand to Darkin's stick, which Darkin had propped between his knees. 'Let me take this for you.'

'No, it's fine.'

'It's no trouble.'

Darkin tried to reach for the stick but Jones had already lifted it away and taken a step back. The moment he was without it, Darkin felt a sudden, sharp panic.

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Over **Section B** and **Section C**, you must write about **three** texts from the following list:

*Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (pre-1900)

Tony Harrison: *Selected Poems*

*The Kite Runner* (post-2000 prose)

*Harvest* (post-2000 prose)

*Hard Times* (pre-1900)

*Henry IV Part I* (pre-1900)

*A Doll's House* (pre-1900)

*The Handmaid's Tale*

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### Section B

Answer **one** question in this section.

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**Either**

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***Songs of Innocence and of Experience* – William Blake**

‘Blake suggests there is no hope for those who are marginalised by society.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Blake’s authorial methods.

**[25 marks]**

**or**

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***Selected Poems* – Tony Harrison**

‘Harrison is more interested in conflict and hostility than resolution and harmony.’

To what extent do you agree with this view of Harrison’s poetry?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Harrison’s authorial methods.

**[25 marks]**

or

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***The Kite Runner* – Khaled Hosseini**

‘With privilege come guilt and shame.’

To what extent do you agree with this view of *The Kite Runner*?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Hosseini’s authorial methods.

**[25 marks]**

or

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***Harvest* – Jim Crace**

‘Jordan brings law and order but it benefits nobody.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Crace’s authorial methods.

**[25 marks]**

or

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***Hard Times* – Charles Dickens**

‘In *Hard Times* education and learning serve no positive purpose.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Dickens’ authorial methods.

**[25 marks]**

or

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| 0 | 7 |
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***Henry IV Part I* – William Shakespeare**

‘Prince Harry uses his power ruthlessly and dishonestly.’

To what extent do you agree with this view?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Shakespeare’s dramatic methods.

**[25 marks]**

**Turn over ►**

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or

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***A Doll's House* – Henrik Ibsen (translated by Michael Meyer)**

'Ibsen suggests that the rights of individuals are more important than any obligation to others.'

To what extent do you agree with this view of *A Doll's House*?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Ibsen's dramatic methods.

**[25 marks]**

or

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***The Handmaid's Tale* – Margaret Atwood**

'The Historical Notes create an optimistic ending to the dystopia.'

To what extent do you agree with this view of the Historical Notes in *The Handmaid's Tale*?

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of Atwood's authorial methods.

**[25 marks]**

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**Section C**

Answer **one** question in this section.

In your answer you must write about **two** texts that you have **not** used in **Section B**.

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**Either**

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'The lives of individuals are controlled by the power of institutions.'

Explore the significance of institutions as presented in **two** political and social protest texts you have studied.

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of authorial methods.

**[25 marks]**

**or**

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| 1 | 1 |
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Explore the significance of conflict as presented in **two** political and social protest texts you have studied.

Remember to include in your answer relevant detailed exploration of authorial methods.

**[25 marks]**

**END OF QUESTIONS**

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**There are no questions printed on this page**

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