

Paper 1 Shakespeare and 19c Novel

A

Top answers
included the
following...

Section A – Shakespeare

- Better responses were from candidates who took the 'big ideas' or key themes from the text and explored them in relation to the themes identified in the Q (AO1)
- 'Use of' rather than 'number of' quotations used in a response determined higher marks (AO1)
- Better responses were from candidates who wrote about where the extract appeared in the text and how characters and text changed/evolved (AO2) – this certainly helped with commenting on structure – with the Romeo and Juliet question for example, many picked up on the fact it was from the start of the play and the importance of this.
- Structure and dramatic impact (genre) were useful to explore as they tended to focus on the text rather than the (mis)use of terminology (AO2)
- Identifying parts of speech did little to enhance responses (AO2)
- Broad interpretation of what 'context' looks like – literary form, genre, contemporary (C21st) and historical are all relevant, rather than sweeping generalisations (AO3) - Students should avoid saying things like 'All Elizabethan fathers were oppressive' or 'All Elizabethan women weak' etc.

For both questions it is the quality of analysis of the effects of the writers' choices of language, structure, form which sees higher marks, not the identification of word classes or number of quotations used.

Paper 1 Shakespeare and 19c Novel

B

Top answers
included the
following...

Section B – 19th century novel

- Clear focus on text and task (AO1)
- Language analysis e.g. imagery, similes etc AND effects linked to the question saw the most effectively developed responses (AO2)
- Careful, precise and relevant use of textual detail. This can take the form of quotations, references to events, incidents, paraphrasing etc. Not necessary to use lengthy quotations. Quotations not always necessary. APT use of quotations rather than number of quotations is important (AO1)
- References to key ideas, themes and portrayal of characters with links to the question (AO1)
- Broader contextual features were more relevant than biographical details of a writer's life (AO3) **It was clear that some students had been given too much contextual detail and were just including it (even if not relevant to the question).**
- Text should be used to discuss relevant ideas relating to the task
- **Better responses were those who had developed a particular argument or viewpoint and then made that the focus of their response, bringing in other parts of the novel as evidence.**

For both questions it is the quality of analysis of the effects of the writers' choices of language, structure, form which sees higher marks, not the identification of word classes or number of quotations used.



Top Tips for Students from AQA (Report on the Examination)

- Know the text. If you know the text well you will be able to demonstrate this knowledge and understanding in the exam. The text should be the focus.
- Answer the question. Perhaps underline the key foci before you start. Make sure you've read the question accurately.
- Demonstrate your knowledge of the text by 'pointing' to particular moments. If you use a direct reference, make sure it's relevant to your answer, and that you can say something useful about it. You don't get extra marks for more quotations, but you do get more marks for making plenty of interesting comments about the references you have selected.
- Appreciate the big themes and ideas of the text. Think about what the writer wanted their audience to understand after watching the play or reading the novel.
- Recognise that there are various ways in which you can show your appreciation of writer's methods. While language analysis is perfectly valid, analysis of structure or characterisation can also be very effective means of showing an understanding and appreciation of what the writer has done.
- Link your comments on contextual factors / ideas to the text. Remember that context informs, but should never dominate, your reading of the text. The text comes first.
- Time spent planning an answer can be very helpful in organising your ideas and helping you to build an argument.