

Success in AQA/AEB 0660 Paper 2

or: *It's not so hard to do better at A Level English Literature!*

What stops candidates achieving their best?

There are many answers to this! However, many fail to achieve the marks they could because they:

- don't address the keywords of the question;
- answer another question;
- off-load what they've been taught rather than answer the question;
- fail to support their assertions with detail from the text.

What can I do?

Study the marking grid

Ask your teacher to explain how it works. Try to do a sample marking exercise like real examiners do before they put red ink on real scripts. Discuss the script by careful reference to the mark scheme, to the question and the text.

Study past question papers

This is not question-spotting — don't try to guess the content of the questions but look at the style and key words which the examiner use. There is likely to be some consistency so that you can expect the same kinds of key words in the next paper. Practice underlining these key words and putting them at the top of your essay plans.

Key words that often appear in 0660 questions

?	importance
?	effect on your thoughts and feelings

- | | |
|---|---|
| ? | how do your thoughts and feelings develop |
| ? | explore |
| ? | ways (something) is presented |
| ? | how do you respond to ... |
| ? | what do you consider to be ... |
| ? | what do you find interesting |
| ? | how far do you feel |
| ? | do you think |
| ? | how (does the writer present) |
| ? | what do you find significant |

Don't use last year's exams for your revision

Instead, try to frame some questions of your own using the key words that the examiners use.

How can I revise?

- You need to be thoroughly acquainted with the texts.
- Be sparing in annotation; your text should not be hidden by a mass of illegible notes
- Rationalise your notes; you could make one set on initial reading and a second set for revision purposes.

What are the examiners looking for?

Good candidates make their reader aware that they have studied literature — the text is an artefact, a construction, and they are exploring how it has been put together. They are rarely dogmatic and are aware of the possibility of alternative readings of the text.

Good candidates concentrate on aspects such as these:

- ✓ presentation
- ✓ effect (eg 'dramatic effect')
- ✓ characterisation (which, of course, is not the same as character)
- ✓ how characters react to each other
- ✓ how effects are created
- ✓ writers' use of language
- ✓ coping with poetry — including quoting it correctly!
- ✓ using evidence — eg by short, integrated quotation
- ✓ thoughts & feelings — in an *informed* personal response
- ✓ the need for close reading
- ✓ selecting apt and succinct extracts
- ✓ making connections between different aspects and sections of the text
- ✓ the multi-layered nature of text
- ✓ writing a coherent, structured answer
- ✓ aware of cultural and historical background (but it's not foreground)

Tom Rank, Roy Hopwood, Jon Rich & Carol Leach for A-Grades Conference, March 2001

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