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A Level English Language and Literature Component 2

CPD Resources

**Dramatic effects 1: Visual impact**

Read this passage from Act 4, Scene 1 of Othello (Resources) in the light of the essay question:

“He has no moral code, only a passion for destruction.” Consider Shakespeare’s presentation of Iago in the light of this statement.

**OTHELLO** Lie with her – lie on her? We say lie on her when they belie her. Lie with her. Zounds, that’s fulsome. Handkerchief – confessions – handkerchief! To confess, and be hang’d for his labour – first, to be hang’d, and then to confess. I tremble at it. Nature would not invest herself in such shadowing passion without some instruction. It is not words that shakes me thus – pish! – noses, ears, and lips. Is’t possible? Confess! Handkerchief! O devil!

[*Falls in a trance.*

**IAGO** Work on,

My medicine, work. Thus credulous fools are caught;

And many worthy and chaste dames even thus,

All guiltless, meet reproach. What, ho! My lord!

My lord, I say! Othello!

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| **Dramatic effects** | **Related language features** |
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**Extract from candidate response:**

We can see Iago’s passion for destruction when at the beginning of Act 4 the stage direction says that Othello “falls in a trance” because of Iago’s deception, and Iago says “Work on my medicine, work! Thus credulous fools are caught.” Calling his general the noun phrase “credulous fool” shows his hatred and scorn for Othello. The repetition of “work!” and the exclamative shows his enjoyment of Othello’s suffering and how he has a passion for destroying people.

**Comment on strengths and weaknesses:**

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| **Strengths** | **Weaknesses** |
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**Now improve the response to include analysis of visual dramatic effects and related linguistic features.**

**Improved response**

**Dramatic effects 2: Dramatic syntax**

Read these two passages from the openings of the consecutive scenes Act 2 Scene 2 and Act 3 Scene 1 of *The Tempest*, with regard to the essay question:

“The play depicts a world where individuals lack freedom.” Explore Shakespeare’s presentation of imprisonment in *The Tempest* in the light of this statement.

**Act 2 Scene 2 (opening):**

*Enter Caliban, with a burden of wood. A noise of thunder heard.*

**CALIBAN**: All the infections that the sun sucks up

From bogs, fens, flats, on Prosper fall, and make him

By inch-meal a disease! His spirits hear me,

And yet I needs must curse. But they’ll nor pinch,

Fright me with urchin-shows, pitch me i’th’mire,

Nor lead me, like a firebrand, in the dark

Out of my way, unless he bid ‘em; but

For every trifle are they set upon me;

Sometimes like apes that mow and chatter at me,

And after bite me; then like hedgehogs which

Lie tumbling in my barefoot way, and mount

Their pricks at my footfall; sometime am I

All wound with adders, who with cloven tongues

Do hiss me into madness.

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**Act 3 Scene 1 (opening):**

*Before Prospero’s cell.*

*Enter Ferdinand, bearing a log.*

**FERDINAND** There be some sports are painful, and their labour

Delight in them sets off; some kinds of baseness

Are nobly undergone, and most poor matters

Point to rich ends. This my mean task

Would be as heavy to me as odious, but

The mistress which I serve quickens what’s dead

And makes my labours pleasures.

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| **Dramatic effects** | **Related language features** |
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**Extract from candidate response:**

Prospero imprisons many characters by using his magical powers, for example Caliban and Ferdinand. He tests Ferdinand by making him carry logs. Ferdinand passes Prospero’s test and is freed so he can become Miranda’s husband, but Caliban stays in Prospero’s power even at the end, as Prospero says “This thing of darkness I acknowledge mine”.

**Comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the response:**

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| **Strengths** | **Weaknesses** |
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**Now improve the response to include analysis of dramatic syntax and any related linguistic features.**

**Improved response**

**My suggestion:**

Both Caliban and Ferdinand are constrained by magic to work for Prospero, but their differing responses to servitude are contrasted at the start of consecutive scenes. Act 2 Scene 2 opens with the stage direction “Enter Caliban, with a burden of wood”, and this entrance is mirrored visually by the start of the following scene, Act 3 Scene 1, where Ferdinand enters “bearing a log”. Shakespeare thus uses dramatic syntax to invite comparison between these two log-bearing prisoners. Caliban is a reluctant servant, cursing Prospero in vitriolic reverse rhymed and alliterating spondees: “All the infections that the **su**n **su**cks up/From bogs, **f**ens, **f**lats...” Ferdinand on the other hand, despite being a prince, who would not normally perform such undignified tasks, shows humility as he accepts his servitude in the cause of love, which “makes [his] labours pleasures”, using courtly antithesis to invert the usual meanings of the contrasting lexical sets of “baseness”, “poor” and “mean”, and “nobly” and “rich”, all of which demonstrates his true moral nobility, making him a worthy suitor for Miranda.

**Dramatic effects 3: Mimesis and diegesis**

Consider the following passages from *Much Ado About Nothing* in the light of this essay question:

“For the audience, they represent nothing more than comedic nonsense.” Examine the dramatic function of Dogberry, Verges and the Watch in *Much Ado About Nothing*.

**Act 3 Scene 2**

**CLAUDIO** Disloyal?

**DON JOHN** The word is too good to paint out her wickedness; I could say she were worse; think you of a worse title, and I will fit her to it. Wonder not till further warrant; go but with me, to-night, you shall see her chamber window ent’red, even the night before her wedding-day. If you love her then, to-morrow wed her; but it would better fit your honour to change your mind.

**CLAUDIO** May this be so?

**DON PEDRO** I will not think it.

**DON JOHN** If you dare not trust that you see, confess not that you know. If you will follow me I will show you enough, and when you have seen more and heard more, proceed accordingly.

**CLAUDIO** If I see anything tonight why I should not marry her, tomorrow in the congregation where I should wed, there I will shame her.

**DON PEDRO** And, as I woo’ed for thee to obtain her, I will join with thee to disgrace her.

**DON JOHN** I will disparage her no farther until you are my witnesses; bear it coldly but till midnight, and let the issue show itself.

**DON PEDRO** O day untowardly turned!

**CLAUDIO** O mischief strangely thwarting!

**DON JOHN** O plague right well prevented! So will you say when you have seen the sequel.

[*Exeunt.*

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**Act 3 Scene 3**

**BORACHIO ...** but know that I haveto-night wooed Margaret, the Lady Hero’s gentlewoman, by the name of Hero; she leans me out at her mistress’ chamber window, bids me a thousand times goodnight – I tell this tale vilely. I should first tell thee how the prince, Claudio and my master, planted and placed and possessed by my master Don John, saw afar off in the orchard this amiable encounter.

**CONRADE** And thought they Margaret was Hero?

**BORACHIO** Two of them did, the prince and Claudio; but the devil my master knew she was Margaret; and partly by his oaths, which first possessed them, partly by the dark night, which did deceive them, but chiefly by my villainy, which did confirm any slander that Don John had made, away went Claudio enrag’d; swore he would meet her, as he was appointed, next morning at the temple, and there, before the whole congregation, shame her with what he saw o’er night, and send her home again without a husband.

**2 WATCH** We charge you in the Prince’s name, stand.

**1 WATCH** Call up the right Master Constable; we have here recover’d the most dangerous piece of lechery that ever was known in the commonwealth.

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| **Dramatic effects** | **Related language features** |
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**Extract from candidate response:**

Shakespeare uses dramatic irony in the scene where Borachio tells Conrade about his trickery. The audience knows that the Watch are listening, although Borachio and Conrade don’t. Also, we know what Borachio is talking about, and the Watch do not. This becomes a very tense scene, although it is still comedy, with the contrast between what Borachio says, such as his “villainy” and Don John’s “slander”, and the Watch’s arresting them for “lechery”, all those three being abstract nouns.

**Comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the response:**

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| **Strengths** | **Weaknesses** |
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**Dramatic effects 1: Visual impact**

**My suggestion:**

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| In Act 4 Scene 1 Shakespeare creates powerful visual impact as we see the great general Othello squirming on the floor in a humiliating fit, while his tormentor stands gloating over him in triumph, a visual demonstration of the reversal of power and Iago’s relish for the destruction of Othello. As we see Othello reduced physically, so his language disintegrates. He uses fragmented syntax, for example “Handkerchief – confessions – handkerchief!” (just nouns), and repeats nonsensical, disconnected minor sentences such as “To confess, and be hang’d for his labour – first, to be hang’d, and then to confess,” which are only non-finite clauses, in chiasmus, suggesting the intensity of his passion and confusion, and the shocking extent of Iago’s destruction. |

**Dramatic effects 2: Dramatic syntax**

**My suggestion:**

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| Both Caliban and Ferdinand are constrained by magic to work for Prospero, but their differing responses to servitude are contrasted at the start of consecutive scenes. Act 2 Scene 2 opens with the stage direction “Enter Caliban, with a burden of wood”, and this entrance is mirrored visually by the start of the following scene, Act 3 Scene 1, where Ferdinand enters “bearing a log”. Shakespeare thus uses dramatic syntax to invite comparison between these two log-bearing prisoners. Caliban is a reluctant servant, cursing Prospero in vitriolic reverse rhymed and alliterating spondees: “All the infections that the **su**n **su**cks up/From bogs, **f**ens, **f**lats...” Ferdinand on the other hand, despite being a prince, who would not normally perform such undignified tasks, shows humility as he accepts his servitude in the cause of love, which “makes [his] labours pleasures”, using courtly antithesis to invert the usual meanings of the contrasting lexical sets of “baseness”, “poor” and “mean”, and “nobly” and “rich”, all of which demonstrates his true moral nobility, making him a worthy suitor for Miranda. |

**Dramatic effects 3: Mimesis and diegesis**

**My suggestion:**

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| In Act 3 Scene 2 Don John prepares Claudio and Don Pedro for the shocking spectacle of Hero being unfaithful, and Shakespeare places noticeable emphasis on their seeing the infidelity (which of course the audience know will be a deceitful, illusory performance). The characters here repeatedly use a lexical set of seeing and showing, with “you shall see her chamber window ent’red”, “If you dare not trust that you see”, “I will show you”, “when you have seen more”, “If I see anything” “until you are my witnesses”, “let the issue show itself” and “when you have seen the sequel”, creating intense anticipation. However, Shakespeare does not then show the scene of supposed infidelity, or Claudio’s reaction, to the audience. Instead, with considerable anxiety and suspense, we hear of it in the next scene in diegetic form, told by Borachio to Conrade, with frustrating narrative diversions to further increase the dramatic tension. All this has the effect of placing climactic expectation on the Watch, who we can see are also listening, to apprehend the villain and prevent catastrophe for Hero. As a result, their incompetence in failing to understand what they have heard, and then subsequently failing to prevent the confrontation at the altar, becomes a great deal more significant than ‘mere comedic nonsense’. |

**Section B: Modern Drama**

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| **Play** | **Dramatic effects** |
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