

Approaching extract-based questions at A level

Component 2 Drama

Using this extract from King Lear, spend 3 or 4 minutes highlighting and annotating what you would include in a 15 minute response.

(taken from WJEC Wales Specimen A level Unit 4 Shakespeare Section A)

King Lear

1. With close reference to the language and imagery in this extract, analyse Shakespeare's presentation of the character of Edgar.

(Enter EDGAR, armed at the third sound, a trumpet before him)

Albany. Ask him his purposes, why he appears
Upon this call o' the' trumpet.

Herald. What are you?
Your name, your quality, and why you answer
This present summons?

Edgar. Know, my name is lost,
By treason's tooth bare-gnawn and canker-bit;
Yet I am as noble as the adversary
I come to cope.

Albany. Which is that adversary?

Edgar. What's he that speaks for Edmund Earl of Gloucester?

Edmund. Himself. What say'st thou to him?

Edgar. Draw thy sword,
That, if my speech offend a noble heart,
Thy arm may do thee justice; here is mine.
Behold, it is the privilege of mine honours,
My oath, and my profession. I protest –
Maugre thy strength, youth, place, and eminence,
Despite thy victor sword and fire-new fortune,
Thy valour and thy heart – thou art a traitor;
False to thy gods, thy brother, and thy father;
Conspirant 'gainst this high illustrious prince;
And, from th' extremest upward of thy head
To the descent and dust below thy foot,
A most toad-spotted traitor. Say thou 'No',
This sword, this arm, and my best spirits, are bent
To prove upon thy heart, whereto I speak,
Thou liest.

(Act 5 Scene iii)