**Component 2 Drama**

**Preparing for the Shakespeare extract**

1. ***At this point in the play***

Encourage knowledge and understanding of the sequence of events in the play by issuing random passages of text (for example on cards or paper) on a regular basis and asking students to arrange them in a chronological order.

Next, ‘place’ the relevant passages by identifying what happened before and what will happen next.

Understanding how the extract of text works within the wider context of the play fosters good knowledge and understanding and aids the acquisition of **meaning**.

1. ***What is happening onstage here?***

As this is a play and therefore a performance text, it is important to remember that:

1. there is an intended audience
2. dramatic techniques/effects are key to Shakespeare’s ***presentation***.

Even if there are no stage directions, Shakespeare conveys **dramatic impact** through language and imagery, be it monologue/soliloquy or dialogue. Effects such as dramatic irony (for example when Prospero speaks in asides in *The Tempest*) and dramatic tension should be considered where relevant. If the given extract involves more than one character, consider the dramatic contribution of other characters in the scene, provided they have a bearing on how the question is framed. For example, in responding to a question on the presentation of King Lear in the 2018 Eduqas paper, we might say that Kent’s speech is important in reinforcing the vulnerability of Lear as he faces the storm – “Alack, bare-headed!” and his speech also reminds the audience of Lear’s circumstances in being cast out of doors and exposed to the elements –“this hard house”. The mention of “this dreadful pudder” creates the dramatic effect of the storm for the audience, with or without staging and sound effects.

1. ***Accessing the meaning through language and punctuation***

It is difficult to begin to address ‘*how Shakespeare presents’* without being able to access the essential **meaning** of the speech/speeches.

Punctuation shapes the given speech/speeches and it is vital to establish quickly what is the main sentence within a passage of text.

In Albany’s attack on Goneril in the WJEC 2018 King Lear extract,

“A father, and a gracious aged man,

    Whose reverence even the head-lugg’d bear would lick,

    Most barbarous, most degenerate, have you madded.”,

candidates need to see the main thrust of Albany’s attack, which is “A father, and a gracious aged man have you madded”.

Reading ‘to the punctuation’ can be developed in class study by colour coding the various parts of a long sentence within a speech, and isolating the main sentence which carries the essential meaning. It is also worth looking closely at the grammatical structure of the speech, clarifying at least what is the ‘subject’ of the sentence and which words and phrases relate to the subject. For example, in the Eduqas extract from *Antony and Cleopatra,* the main sentence is in red:

“……………….**Thou** **art sworn**, **Eros**,

That when the exigent should come – which now

Is come indeed – when I should see behind me

Th’ inevitable prosecution of

Disgrace and horror, **that, on my command,**

**Thou then wouldst kill me**.”

Once grasped, the embedded clauses/phrases should be broken down and examined for their contribution to the meaning of the speech as a whole.

1. ***Identifying key words/images***

In preparation for the extract, it is important to practise the skill of being able to see a **pattern of words/images** where they appear in the given extract. This is a helpful approach to analysing Shakespeare’s presentation in the limited time available for this task. For example, in Prospero’s speech from the Eduqas 2018 extract from *The Tempes*t, we may identify the following as contributing to the idea of Prospero the magician, the actor, the illusionist as he refers both to the wedding masque he created and to the stage/play motif in the play as a whole, but particularly towards the end of the play as he abjures his magic:

“Our **revels** now are ended. These our **actors**,

As I foretold you, were all **spirits**, and are melted into air, into **thin air**;

And, like the **baseless** fabric of this **vision**,

The cloud-capp’d towers, the gorgeous palaces,

The solemn temples, the great globe itself,

Yea, all of which it inherit, shall **dissolve**,

And, like this **insubstantial** **pageant** faded,

Leave not a rack behind.”

In identifying patterning of this kind, looking for related words and images, it is easier to access **implicit meaning**.

**Component 2 Drama**

**Preparing for the Shakespeare essay**

What makes a good literary essay?

-***Engagement*** with the text and the task

-***Developed and sustained*** argument

-***Supported*** argument

-***Integrated*** contextual material

-***Integrated*** critical views

1. *Unpacking the task*

Every task set for this section of the paper targets the relevant Assessment Objectives, and it is important in preparing for this task that candidates have had regular practice of identifying AO2, AO3 and AO5 in any given question.

For example, the 2018 Eduqas part (ii) question on *The Tempest* should be carefully broken down before an essay plan is formulated:

Q 5 (ii)

|  |
| --- |
| “As the dramatic action of the play is essentially nothing but a series of conjuring tricks, it is difficult for an audience to relate to any of the characters and their situation.” How far would you agree with this view of *The Tempest*? |

A ***critical view*** of the play will be the focus of all questions in the essay task, in order to address AO5. In this instance the main view expressed is that the play is ‘*essentially nothing but a series of conjuring tricks*’ with the additional and related perspective of ‘*difficult for an audience to relate to any of the characters and their situation*’. Candidates should attempt to engage with **both** parts of this critical view, even if they go on to pay more attention to one or the other. It is not advisable for the candidate to ‘select’ which parts of the question he/she wishes to examine. It is important here not to ignore the concept of ‘*conjuring tricks*’ as this is a vital part of the critical view.

The question gives a contextual steer to AO3 through the focus on ‘*difficult for an* *audience*’ as the idea of audience rapport with characters, events and situations is an important concept in considering the contexts in which texts are received.

The question gives the candidate the opportunity to consider how Shakespeare’s language and dramatic techniques shape meaning for AO2 through the focus on *dramatic action* as well as *characters and situation*.

*2. Engagement with the text and task*

*Engagement* refers to the candidate’s ***ability to connect with*** both the text and the task question, and it is always a good idea to show this engagement as soon as possible in the response.

The following extract is the opening paragraph from one of the full candidate scripts which appear for this component in the CPD Resource booklet, in response to the essay task on *The Tempest* as given above:

|  |
| --- |
| Lovell suggests that ‘The Tempest’ is indeed a ‘succession of illusions’. This is reflective of the view that dramatic action is created by ‘conjuring tricks’, creating situations that are far from reality. This being said, whilst the characters’ situations seem unrealistic due to the dreamlike setting of the island, conventional ideas of colonialism and a patriarchal society are prevalent in the deeper meaning of the play. |

This candidate immediately engages with AO5 by introducing a relevant critical view of her own and then linking it with the given view in the question by tackling both *conjuring tricks* and *characters and situation*. AO3 is addressed, not yet through the concept of ‘audience’ though this may be implicitly grasped through ‘unrealistic’, but through the candidate’s introduction of key contextual concepts such as *colonialism* and *patriarchal society*.

1. *Developed and sustained argument*

It is important to remember that in writing a literary essay, developing and sustaining an argument is a key aspect of addressing **AO1**. Examiners will give careful consideration to whether the response is coherent and sensibly structured and whether there is a sustained focus on the question. It is also important to realise that AO1 and AO5 can sometimes dovetail in a good response, as the candidate constructs an argument in relation to the critical view in the question.

The candidate above goes on to develop her argument in the second paragraph:

|  |
| --- |
| The relationship between Miranda and her father is unlike Shakespeare’s other plays for example ‘Othello’ in which the father daughter relationship provides a source of conflict. It seems as though in this late play Shakespeare sought tp present a different kind of father daughter relationship in which the father brings about the marriage which his daughter desires. This may initially be thought to be true due to Miranda and Ferdinand’s immediate infatuation with each other, with Ferdinand thinking that Miranda is a “goddess’. However, with the contextual knowledge of a patriarchal society and arranged marriages of the 17th century which Julia Briggs explains to be a ‘generally accepted way of preserving and increasing family assets’ a modern audience may become sceptical of the authenticity of the relationship. |

**Development** is shown through the discussion of the father daughter relationship and also a modern audience’s perception of the Miranda-Ferdinand relationship.

There is also a **sustained** focus on the question by the attempt to look closely at characters and situation.

1. *Supported argument*

Support may be offered in terms of **textual reference** where it is related closely and relevant to the question, or **textual quotation**. However, arguments can also be supported by two other important sources: **contextual sources** and **critical sources**. A strong response will use material wisely, endorsing or illustrating the point made in the argument.

The following extract is taken from a response to the 2018 Eduqas *Henry IV Part 1* essay question:

|  |
| --- |
| Q 4 iiHow far would you agree that :the play *King Henry IV Part 1* is essentially about the nature and costs of political success”? |

|  |
| --- |
| King Henry IV in both the play and real life acquired the throne by overthrowing Richard II. Although this was a great success for him, it came at the cost of setting a precedent for rebellion that his previous conspirators turned back on him when they initiated his own rebellion. Hotspur believed the King ‘broke oath on oath’ backed by Worcester’s belief the King ‘forgot his oath’. This central theme certainly indicates that the play, as one of Shakespeare’s history plays, is about the rebellion and therefore the costs of political success. However, Sidney describes the play as a ‘mingling of kings and clowns’ in reference to the many scenes involving the Prince and Falstaff and their humour. Indeed, in Act 1 scene 1 already the idea of Hal’s unworthiness is introduced by the King when he bemoans that ‘riot and dishonour stain the brow of my young Harry’ whilst praising Hotspur as ‘Mars in swaddling clothes’. This suggests that the Prince will be a central character in the play already and this is confirmed to the audience in his soliloquy at the end of Act 2 scene 2 where the Prince points out that ‘if all the year were playing holidays, to sport would be as tedious as to work’, foreshadowing his later reformation into the ‘feathered Mercury’ that kills Hotspur and redeems his ‘lost opinion’. Greenblatt proposes that the Prince ‘confirms the Machiavellian hypothesis’ in reference to Niccolo Machiavelli’s book The Prince that claims that a prince must first be unruly and mix with the public before becoming a successful king. This implies that rather than being about political success the play is more focused on Hal and his development which is convincing because no other character develops to the extent of the Prince. |

This response illustrates how textual support can enrich and develop the central argument. The candidate argues from the vantage point of **detailed knowledge and understanding** of the play. In addition, **literary and historical contexts** are used to inform the debate and endorse the candidate’s own view of the play in the light of the question. The use of other **critical views** (Sidney, Greenblatt) further develops and supports the argument.

1. *Integrated contextual material*

Contextual material should never be presented as ‘stand alone’ material, which does little or nothing to develop the candidate’s response to the question. It is essential to remember that textual analysis in response to the given question should always be paramount in a literary essay, with contextual material used to ***inform, enrich, and illuminate the argument***.

There is little to be gained by relating in detail historical events, or asserting various claims regarding people’s lives/attitudes/values. It is important to look at the task and ask *what contextual knowledge could be useful* in helping to shape a response. The strongest responses will make ‘productive’ use of contexts, in that they will clearly advance their argument through discussion of pertinent contextual factors. Many forget that there is a rich **cultural tradition** of drama and in particular **Shakespeare’s own play**s to draw on, as well as giving consideration to **different audiences’ receptio**n of the plays. **Various productions** of the play can be relevant both for context, in terms of audience reception, and critical interpretation, AO5.

Shakespeare’ **sources or literary influences** are also important contextual factors, but only if relevant to the question.

The extract which follows is from a script which appears on the 2018 OER for Component 2, in response to the 2018 Eduqas Hamlet essay question:

|  |
| --- |
| 3 iiHow far would you agree that “for any audience, the appeal of this tragedy is drawn from Shakespeare’s presentation of Hamlet the son rather than Hamlet the avenger”? |

Consider where *integrated contextual material* features in this extract (\*spelling errors are candidate’s own):

|  |
| --- |
| Hamlet is not, however, presented as “Hamlet the son” throughout the play – indeed he goes through many shifts of character, which can be charted through his various emotionally raw soliloquys\*. The most notable instance of a shift from “son” to “avenger” occurs when Hamlet is in England, fighting pirates (something that notably occurs offstage – insinuating perhaps that the transition is not so much what concerns Shakespeare, but rather the beginning and the end product). When he returns, the culmination of all his incessant questioning is “Let be.” – the simple two words make a dramatic shift from the extended soliloquys and monologues that preceded it. Hamlet represents here, the rise of the intellectual that was seen in the Renaissance period, when there was an increase in the number of universities and increased interest in questioning the nature of life. Marowitz agrees with this, calling Hamlet “the paralysed intellectual”, someone who can “describe every facet of a problem yet never pull his finger out”. Although Hamlet does indeed end up acting as the avenger, his position in the play as a character who represents Renaissance beliefs, and is neither the “son” or the “avenger” is seen in such statements as “What a piece of work is man” and questions like “To be or not to be, that is the question”.There is historical truth behind both the presentation of “Hamlet the son” and the avenger; Saxo Grammaticus, the history of ‘Amleth’ (widely considered to be the source of Shakespeare’s inspiration for the tragedy of Hamlet) also presents Amleth as an individual who transitions from “son” to “avenger”…. |

1. *Integrated critical views*

As with using contextual material, simply quoting other critical views in a vacuum does not develop or enrich the candidate’s response. It is worth remembering that there are a few ways to address AO5, and all of them have to be integrated into the response. As is the case with contextual material also, candidates must show good textual analysis in their responses.

* AO5 must be addressed firstly by **engaging with the given critical vi**ew in the question. The quality of the essay overall will be determined by this engagement, as discussed in the first point of this section.
* AO5 can be addressed by the candidate considering **possible alternative interpretations of the text of his/her own**, which are relevant to the question. This is sometimes understood by “plurality of reading”, signalling that it is important to consider various sides to an argument, rather than one.
* AO5 can be purposefully addressed by engaging with **another critical view**, often a named critic, or by reference to a known critical view, either held by an individual or by a recognised critical tradition or perspective.

In another response to the same Eduqas 2018 Hamlet essay question, the following

candidate shows some of these ways of integrating critical views:

|  |
| --- |
| However, it could also be argued that the role of Hamlet the avenger is appealing to any audience when examining his shift in attitudes towards death by Act 5. Fintan O’Toole describes Hamlet as “a man of action…always concerned with the moment of passage between this life and the next.”While in Act Three Scene One, Hamlet’s contemplation of suicide (which was a punishable crime in seventeenth century England) did not seem to make him a ‘man of action’, the graveyard scene seems to show Hamlet’s determination to be an avenger: “Alexander/returneth to dust, dust is of earth, of earth we make loam.” By stating that even men as impressive and powerful as Alexander the Great, simply become dust in the end, Hamlet emphasises the role of death, which makes all men equal after death no matter their status in life. |

Other responses on OER and in the PowerPoint slides illustrate integration of AO5.

**Component 2 Drama**

**Preparing for the Section B Drama essay**

All the skills required for the Shakespeare essay are needed for this task, but there is the additional crucial requirement to **make connections** (**AO4**). The one task in this section carries the same number of marks as the two Shakespeare section tasks in total.

Ways to make connections should always be through **textual analysis** and through consideration of the critical view in the question. It is equally valid to **discuss contrasts as well as comparisons**, provided there is a direct link to the task. Candidates can make connections/contrasts between texts through examining closely **the language and dramatic features of the texts** and **the presentation of characters** **and situations**.

The following extracts from a candidate response are to the 2018 question on *Doctor Faustus* and *Enron*:

|  |
| --- |
| Q 7.“*Doctor Faustus* shows us that testing the limits of knowledge is neither moral nor immoral.” In the light of this statement, explore connections between the presentation of ideas about knowledge in *Doctor Faustus* and *Enron*. |

How has this candidate approached making connections?

|  |
| --- |
| Both Lucy Prebble and Christopher Marlowe are alike in questioning whether knowledge is moral or immoral in both Enron (2009) and Doctor Faustus (1590). Specifically, the post modern spectacle focusing on a corrupt protagonist testing the limits of corporate knowledge, resulting in both moral capitalism adventures and immoral exploitation of normal people. Whereas, the harrowing ELizabethan tragedy portrays a learned man testing the possibility of divine knowledge resulting in a moral conflict of the soul.…. Unlike Faustus, in Enron risk is displayed by more than one person. “Risk is the fear of losing something. Risk is life basically. “ is stated by Fastow, presenting that morals are not considered when attempting to get ahead. Skilling also wants complete knowledge in all arenas….. Similar to Faustus, [Skilling] is being punished for his ubermensch qualities and the bright lights set behind him on stage provide an image of divine punishment for reaching high. R Clement states that Prebble uses ‘theatre form to criticise the matter’, scolding Skilling’s desire to be the most knowledgeable corporate power. Yet Skilling is not an independent study. Both the collapse of the Lehman brothers and the Lewinsky scandal proposed that immorality was rife in all areas of capitalist America, promoting a Marxist critique of society as a whole. Therefore, Skilling uses knowledge to find ‘loopholes so big’ that he can hide his immoral ambitions. Yet, Faustus perhaps uses knowledge to learn more about himself and the universe rather than for selfish gains. He is exhausted that “ art thou still but Faustus, and a man.” |
|  |