Pearson Edexcel International GCSE (9–1)

Time 1 hour 30 minutes

Paper reference **4ET1/02**

English Literature

PAPER 2: Modern Drama and Literary Heritage Texts

Question Booklet

Do not return this booklet with your Answer Booklet.
Clean copies of your set texts may be taken into the examination.

Turn over ▶

P65911RA

©2021 Pearson Education Ltd.

1/1/1/1/1

P 6 5 9 1 1 R A

Pearson

stemup.co.uk

BLANK PAGE

stemup.co.uk

Answer TWO questions:

Answer ONE question from Section A and ONE question from Section B.

SECTION A: Modern Drama	**Page**
A View from the Bridge, Arthur Miller	4
An Inspector Calls, J B Priestley	4
The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time, Mark Haddon (adapted by Simon Stephens)	5
Kindertransport, Diane Samuels	5
Death and the King's Horseman, Wole Soyinka	6
SECTION B: Literary Heritage Texts	
Romeo and Juliet, William Shakespeare	7
Macbeth, William Shakespeare	7
The Merchant of Venice, William Shakespeare	8
Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen	8
Great Expectations, Charles Dickens	9
The Scarlet Letter, Nathaniel Hawthorne	9

stemup.co.uk

SECTION A: Modern Drama

Answer ONE question on ONE text from this section.

You should spend 45 minutes on your chosen question.

A View from the Bridge, Arthur Miller

EITHER

1 How does Eddie Carbone change in *A View from the Bridge*?

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 1 = 30 marks)

OR

2 Explore the theme of loyalty in the play.

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 2 = 30 marks)

An Inspector Calls, J B Priestley

EITHER

3 In what ways are Sheila Birling and Mrs Sybil Birling different in the play?

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 3 = 30 marks)

OR

4 Discuss the importance of the truth in *An Inspector Calls*.

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 4 = 30 marks)

stemup.co.uk

***The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*, Mark Haddon**
(adapted by Simon Stephens)

EITHER

5 How does Stephens present Christopher's relationships with different women in the play?

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 5 = 30 marks)

OR

6 Discuss the significance of different settings in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*.

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 6 = 30 marks)

***Kindertransport*, Diane Samuels**

EITHER

7 'Helga acts with good intentions throughout the play.'

How far do you agree with this statement?

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 7 = 30 marks)

OR

8 Explore the significance of the past in *Kindertransport*.

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 8 = 30 marks)

stemup.co.uk

***Death and the King's Horseman*, Wole Soyinka**

EITHER

9 'Elesin never intends to complete his role as the King's Horseman in the play.'

How far do you agree with this statement?

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 9 = 30 marks)

OR

10 Explore the importance of different Yoruba traditions in *Death and the King's Horseman*.

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(Total for Question 10 = 30 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 30 MARKS

stemup.co.uk

SECTION B: Literary Heritage Texts

Answer ONE question on ONE text from this section.

You should spend 45 minutes on your chosen question.

***Romeo and Juliet*, William Shakespeare**

EITHER

11 How does Shakespeare present the relationship between Romeo and Friar Lawrence in *Romeo and Juliet*?

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(Total for Question 11 = 30 marks)

OR

12 'Some characters in *Romeo and Juliet* are quick to forgive whilst others do not forgive at all.'

Explore the theme of forgiveness in the play.

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(Total for Question 12 = 30 marks)

***Macbeth*, William Shakespeare**

EITHER

13 Macbeth: 'I dare do all that may become a man…'

Explore the significance of masculinity in *Macbeth*.

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(Total for Question 13 = 30 marks)

OR

14 Discuss the presentation of characters who influence Macbeth in the play.

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(Total for Question 14 = 30 marks)

stemup.co.uk

***The Merchant of Venice*, William Shakespeare**

EITHER

15 Discuss how Portia behaves in the play.

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(Total for Question 15 = 30 marks)

OR

16 Explore the theme of loss in *The Merchant of Venice*.

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(Total for Question 16 = 30 marks)

***Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen**

EITHER

17 How does Elizabeth Bennet develop in *Pride and Prejudice*?

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 17 = 30 marks)

OR

18 Discuss the significance of misunderstandings in the novel.

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 18 = 30 marks)

stemup.co.uk

***Great Expectations*, Charles Dickens**

EITHER

19 How does Dickens present **one** morally good character in the novel?

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 19 = 30 marks)

OR

20 Discuss the theme of growing up in *Great Expectations*.

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 20 = 30 marks)

***The Scarlet Letter*, Nathaniel Hawthorne**

EITHER

21 Discuss the presentation of **one** character you sympathise with in the novel.

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 21 = 30 marks)

OR

22 Explore the theme of guilt in *The Scarlet Letter*.

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the novel in your answer.

(Total for Question 22 = 30 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION B = 30 MARKS
TOTAL FOR PAPER = 60 MARKS

stemup.co.uk

BLANK PAGE

stemup.co.uk

BLANK PAGE

stemup.co.uk

BLANK PAGE

stemup.co.uk

Please check the examination details below before entering your candidate information

Candidate surname	Other names

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

Centre Number | Candidate Number

Time 1 hour 30 minutes

Paper reference **4ET1/02**

English Literature

PAPER 2: Modern Drama and Literary Heritage Texts

You must have:
Question Booklet (enclosed)

Total Marks

Instructions

- Use **black** ink or ball-point pen.
- **Fill in the boxes** at the top of this page with your name, centre number and candidate number.
- Answer **ONE** question from each section.
- Answer the questions in the spaces provided
  – *there may be more space than you need.*

Information

- The total mark for this paper is 60.
- The marks for **each** question are shown in brackets
  – *use this as a guide as to how much time to spend on each question.*
- Copies of the *Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology* may **not** be brought into the examination.
- Dictionaries may **not** be used in this examination.
- Clean copies of your set texts may be taken into the examination.

Advice

- Read each question carefully before you start to answer it.
- Check your answers if you have time at the end.
- Good luck with your examination.

Turn over ▶

P65911RA

©2021 Pearson Education Ltd.

1/1/1/1/1

P 6 5 9 1 1 R A 0 1 1 6

Pearson

stemup.co.uk

SECTION A: Modern Drama

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box ☒. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

Chosen question number:

Question 1 ☒	**Question 2** ☒	**Question 3** ☒
Question 4 ☒	**Question 5** ☒	**Question 6** ☒
Question 7 ☒	**Question 8** ☒	**Question 9** ☒
Question 10 ☒		

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

stemup.co.uk

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA
DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA
DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

stemup.co.uk

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

stemup.co.uk

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA
DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA
DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

stemup.co.uk

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

stemup.co.uk

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

stemup.co.uk

TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 30 MARKS

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA
DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA
DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

stemup.co.uk

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

SECTION B: Literary Heritage Texts

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box ☒. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

Chosen question number:

Question 11 ☒	**Question 12** ☒	**Question 13** ☒
Question 14 ☒	**Question 15** ☒	**Question 16** ☒
Question 17 ☒	**Question 18** ☒	**Question 19** ☒
Question 20 ☒	**Question 21** ☒	**Question 22** ☒

stemup.co.uk

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

stemup.co.uk

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA
DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA
DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

stemup.co.uk

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

stemup.co.uk

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA
DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA
DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

stemup.co.uk

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

stemup.co.uk

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

TOTAL FOR SECTION B = 30 MARKS
TOTAL FOR PAPER = 60 MARKS

stemup.co.uk

BLANK PAGE

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA
DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA
DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

stemup.co.uk

Surname	StemUp Model Solution
Answer booklet	Write the question number in the left-hand margin at the start of each answer.

Question number

1

Eddie Carbone changes from a respected, generous and fiercely principled longshoreman into a man who betrays everything he once stood for. Yet what makes Miller's presentation so unsettling is that the change is less a sudden transformation than a slow exposure: the feelings that destroy Eddie are present from the first scene, and the play charts how he loses the ability to hide them, even from himself.

At the start Eddie is presented as warm, protective and part of a close community. His affection for Catherine seems at first like a father's pride, and his nickname for her, "Madonna", casts her as pure and holy. However, Miller plants unease even here. Eddie is uncomfortable with her new skirt and her walk, and his complaint that "heads are turning like windmills" when she walks down the street reveals how closely he watches the attention of other men. The hyperbolic simile is comic on the surface, but it suggests that Catherine's growing up feels to Eddie like a public threat. Equally, his loyalty to the Red Hook code seems absolute. When he tells the story of Vinny Bolzano, the boy who informed on his uncle, he asks how such a person is "gonna show his face". Structurally this is a piece of dramatic irony that Miller sets like a trap: Eddie unknowingly describes his own fate.

The arrival of Marco and Rodolpho is the catalyst for change. Initially Eddie is hospitable, proud to offer shelter as others once did for his own family. As Catherine falls for Rodolpho, however, his language narrows into suspicion and mockery. He insists that Rodolpho "ain't right", fixating on his singing, his cooking and his blond hair, which suggests that Eddie, unable to admit his own desire,

Question number

displaces it onto attacks on Rodolpho's masculinity. Alfieri's description of Eddie's eyes as "like tunnels" is a striking image of this change: tunnels are dark, narrow and lead in only one direction, implying that Eddie's vision has shrunk to a single obsession and that his path is already fixed.

Miller also shows Eddie's change through his marriage. Beatrice's painful question, "When am I gonna be a wife again, Eddie?", exposes a coldness that has been growing for months. Eddie's evasive reply and later demand, "I want my respect", show him clinging to the outward dignity of a husband while emotionally abandoning the role. The contrast between what Eddie says and what he does becomes the central tension of the play.

Increasingly, Eddie's change is shown physically rather than verbally. This is important because, unlike many tragic heroes, Eddie is never given a soliloquy in which to explain himself. Instead, Miller uses stage directions to reveal what Eddie cannot say. In Act Two, returning drunk, he kisses Catherine and then pins and kisses Rodolpho, standing with "tears rolling down his face" as he laughs at him. The juxtaposition of tears and mockery is deeply revealing: this is a man in agony who can only express pain through aggression. Similarly, the boxing lesson in Act One, where he lands an apparently accidental blow on Rodolpho, shows violence disguised as play, and Marco's silent response of lifting the chair over Eddie's head warns that Eddie's authority in his own home is slipping.

The turning point is Eddie's phone call to the Immigration Bureau. Alfieri has already warned him that the law cannot help, and Miller stages the call in the shadow of the lawyer's office, suggesting that Eddie walks knowingly into darkness. In this moment he becomes Vinny Bolzano. His frantic protest to Catherine that Rodolpho is "stealing from me!" reveals the possessive logic behind

Question number

the betrayal: the pronoun "me" exposes that he sees Catherine as something he owns. The final scenes show the cost of this change. Spat on by Marco and shunned by the neighbours, Eddie becomes obsessed with his reputation, repeating that he wants his "name" back. Ironically, he is now fighting for the very honour he has destroyed.

Yet the ending complicates any simple sense that Eddie has become a villain. His dying words, "My B.!", turn him back to Beatrice, hinting at a love buried under his obsession. Alfieri's closing speech admits that he loves Eddie because he allowed himself to be "wholly known". Perhaps, then, Miller presents Eddie's change as a tragic unmasking rather than a corruption: the respectable Eddie of the opening was only ever half of him, and the play's structure, moving inexorably towards death, exposes the rest.

2 In A View from the Bridge, loyalty is the invisible law that holds the Red Hook community together, and Miller builds his tragedy around what happens when competing loyalties collide. Eddie's loyalty to the Italian code of silence, Beatrice's loyalty to her husband, and Marco's loyalty to his family and brother are all tested, and the play suggests that loyalty is admirable but dangerous when it becomes possessive or rigid.

Miller establishes the code of loyalty early through Eddie's story of Vinny Bolzano. Eddie warns Catherine and Beatrice that it must never come out of their mouths who the cousins are, and he recounts how Vinny was dragged down the stairs by his own family after informing on an uncle. Catherine's horrified question, "What, was he crazy?", shows that disloyalty is almost unimaginable to her, so deeply has the code been absorbed. Structurally, this anecdote works as a warning to the

Question number

audience. By making Eddie the one who tells it, and who insists that you can more quickly get back stolen money than "a word you gave away", Miller creates a powerful dramatic irony: the man who preaches loyalty most fiercely will be the one who breaks it.

Marco embodies a quieter, more traditional loyalty. He sends nearly all his earnings home, telling Beatrice "I send everything", and his concern is always for his wife and starving children. His loyalty to Rodolpho is shown less through words than through action. After Eddie's boxing lesson, in which he strikes Rodolpho, Marco challenges Eddie to lift a chair by one leg and then raises it above Eddie's head. The stage direction describes his "glare of warning" turning into "a smile of triumph". This silent gesture is a form of speech in itself: Marco is telling Eddie that an attack on his brother is an attack on him. Miller's use of physical theatre makes Marco's loyalty feel ancient and instinctive, something beyond argument.

Beatrice's loyalty is perhaps the most painful in the play. Eddie has neglected her so completely that she must ask "When am I gonna be a wife again, Eddie?", yet she never abandons him. She defends Catherine and pushes her towards independence, but in the final act she is torn between going to Catherine's wedding and staying with her husband. Her choice to stay, and the play's final image of Eddie dying in her arms, presents loyalty as both noble and costly. Miller seems to suggest that Beatrice's loyalty survives because it is clear-sighted: she is the one character who tells Eddie the truth, that he cannot have Catherine.

Eddie's own understanding of loyalty, however, becomes twisted into ownership. He expects Rodolpho to repay his hospitality with obedience, and he expects Catherine's loyalty to remain with him as if she were still a child. His demand "I want my respect" shows how he confuses loyalty with control. When he finally

Question number

phones the Immigration Bureau, Miller stages the moment beside Alfieri's office, with the lawyer having warned him that the community would never forgive him. The call is an act of betrayal against the very code Eddie defended, and the immediate consequence is the arrest of not only Marco and Rodolpho but other men hiding in the building, widening his disloyalty to the whole community.

The consequences are shown through the community's reaction. Marco spits in Eddie's face and accuses him in public, and the neighbours, including Lipari the butcher, turn away from him. The stage directions here are crucial: the crowd's silence condemns Eddie more fully than any speech could. Eddie's desperate claim that he gave the cousins the blankets off his bed is an attempt to reframe himself as loyal, but it rings hollow because loyalty in Red Hook is measured by silence, not by generosity.

Finally, Miller questions whether loyalty can be a destructive force even in good men. Marco's loyalty to his children leads him to break his promise to Alfieri not to harm Eddie, and the fight that follows ends with Eddie's death by his own knife. Alfieri's view that it is better to "settle for half" suggests that the tragedy comes from characters who refuse compromise. In this sense, loyalty is presented not as a simple virtue but as a passionate, primitive bond, which in Miller's play is capable of both protecting a family and destroying a man.

3 Priestley presents Sheila and Sybil Birling as mother and daughter who begin the play looking surprisingly alike and end it as moral opposites. The difference between them is not simply one of age or temperament, but of the capacity to change: Sheila listens to the Inspector and is transformed, while Mrs Birling hardens into denial. Through this contrast, Priestley dramatises the choice his

Question number

audience must make between accepting responsibility and hiding behind class and respectability.

From the opening stage directions, Priestley signals a difference. Mrs Birling is "a rather cold woman" and her husband's "social superior", while Sheila is "very pleased with life and rather excited". The adjectives "cold" and "excited" immediately set stillness against energy, suggesting that one character is fixed and the other capable of movement. Even so, in Act One Sheila shares much of her mother's privileged outlook. She is absorbed by her engagement ring and teases Gerald playfully, and her slang, such as "squiffy", draws her mother's prim disapproval. Mrs Birling's rebuke, "What an expression, Sheila!", along with her reproach to Arthur for complimenting the cook, shows how she polices manners. Priestley makes her obsessed with the surface of things, and this is the first sign that she values propriety over feeling.

The Inspector's arrival exposes a deeper difference. When Sheila hears that Eva Smith was sacked for asking for higher wages, her response is instinctive empathy: "But these girls aren't cheap labour". The plain, emphatic claim that they are "people" contrasts sharply with her mother's language. Mrs Birling dismisses Eva as "a girl of that sort", a phrase whose vague words "that" and "sort" work to push Eva away into a category. Priestley shows that language itself is a moral choice: Sheila names Eva as a human being, while her mother reduces her to a social type.

However, Priestley does not make Sheila a saint. Her confession about Milwards shows that she, too, abused her power, having a girl dismissed out of jealousy. What distinguishes her is her honesty. Her halting admission that she told the manager the girl had been "very impertinent" is broken by dashes, which suggest a

Question number

painful struggle to tell the truth fully. She admits plainly that she is "ashamed" of herself. Mrs Birling, by contrast, first claims not to recognise the photograph and then insists she was right to refuse Eva help from the charity committee. Her imperatives to the Inspector, "Go and look for the father of the child", sound authoritative, but they are a strategy of deflection. Structurally, Priestley creates a devastating irony here: as Mrs Birling demands that the father be punished severely, the audience and Sheila realise that she is condemning her own son, Eric. Sheila's alarmed, broken attempts to stop her mother reveal that she now sees what her mother cannot.

By Act Three, Sheila has taken on part of the Inspector's role. She recognises his method, observing that he is "giving us the rope", and she warns her mother against building a "wall" between the family and Eva. This metaphor of the wall is significant: Mrs Birling's whole worldview depends on barriers between classes, and Sheila now wants to break them down. The stage directions also highlight the contrast in their distress. Mrs Birling becomes alarmed because her reputation is under threat, whereas Sheila is distressed because she has understood the human cost of her actions.

The ending confirms their separation. When Gerald and Mr Birling discover that the Inspector may be a fraud, Mrs Birling is relieved and congratulates herself on being the only one who did not "give in" to him. She repeats that she accepts no blame "at all", and the finality of that phrase shows that she has learnt nothing. Sheila, however, refuses to return to the comfortable illusion, sarcastically remarking, "I suppose we're all nice people now." Her irony exposes the hollowness of her parents' relief, and she insists that what they did is still true whether or not the Inspector was real.

Question number

Ultimately, Priestley uses the two women to show that change is possible but not inevitable. Mrs Birling represents a generation fixed in its class assumptions, while Sheila represents the hope that the young can listen and learn. When the final telephone call announces that a real inspector is on his way, the contrast feels urgent: Sheila is prepared to face it, while her mother has already shut the door.

4 Truth lies at the heart of An Inspector Calls, which is structured as an investigation whose purpose is not to find a criminal but to drag a hidden moral truth into the light. Priestley shows that the Birlings' comfortable world depends on concealment, and the play tests each character by how they respond when the truth is revealed. Crucially, the play suggests that the most important truth is not a fact, such as whether the Inspector is real, but a moral one: that everyone helped to destroy Eva Smith.

Priestley establishes from the start that the Birlings' respectable surface hides an uncomfortable reality. The opening stage directions describe their dining room as "substantial and heavily comfortable, but not cosy and homelike", and the conjunction "but" exposes the gap between appearance and truth. The lighting is to be "pink and intimate" until the Inspector arrives, when it becomes "brighter and harder". This shift in lighting is a visual metaphor for the play's purpose: the Inspector brings a harsh, revealing light that strips away the rosy illusion.

Mr Birling's speeches in Act One also show how the characters live in a world of comfortable falsehood. His confident claim that the Titanic is "unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable" is dramatic irony, since the audience knows the truth he does not. Priestley uses this to undermine Birling's authority before the investigation even begins, suggesting that a man so wrong about the world is

Question number

unlikely to be right about his own innocence. Birling's hint about a possible knighthood shows him bending the truth to impress Gerald, revealing how status matters more to him than honesty.

The Inspector's method is designed to extract the truth systematically. He insists on following "one line of enquiry at a time" and shows the photograph to one person at a time, so each confession is isolated and complete. This structure gives the play the rhythm of a series of revelations, with each act ending on a new disclosure, such as the Inspector's question about Gerald and Daisy Renton or the revelation that Eric is the father. The cumulative effect is that the truth grows larger and more shocking as the play unfolds, implicating the whole family.

Characters respond to the truth in strikingly different ways. Mr Birling admits sacking Eva but insists "I was quite justified", treating the truth as a matter of business rather than conscience. Mrs Birling initially lies, denying she recognises the photograph, and then refuses to accept the implications of what she did. Gerald conceals his affair until the name Daisy Renton surprises him, and Sheila's remark that at least she is "trying to tell the truth" draws attention to his evasiveness. By contrast, Sheila and Eric become increasingly honest. Eric's blunt admission, "We did her in all right", uses colloquial, unvarnished language which refuses to soften what happened. His insistence that "the girl's dead and we all helped to kill her" returns repeatedly to the plain facts, as if he will not allow anyone to escape them.

The Inspector's own language is stark and truthful. His description of Eva as "A pretty, lively sort of girl" who "died in misery and agony" uses short, simple clauses that confront the Birlings with the reality of her suffering. His final speech raises the truth to a universal level: "We are members of one body", he declares, warning

Question number

that if men will not learn this lesson they will be taught it "in fire and blood and anguish". The triadic structure and prophetic tone suggest that this truth is not only personal but social and urgent.

Priestley then complicates the idea of truth in Act Three. Gerald discovers that there is no Inspector Goole on the force and the infirmary has had no suicide. Mr and Mrs Birling seize on this as a release, suggesting that if the facts can be disproved, the moral guilt disappears. Sheila and Eric reject this, recognising that what they did remains true regardless. This is the play's central question: is truth only what can be proved, or what we know in our consciences? Priestley clearly endorses the second view.

The final twist confirms this. The telephone rings to announce that a girl has just died and a police inspector is on his way. The cyclical structure forces the family, and the audience, to confront the truth again. Priestley suggests that the truth cannot be escaped; it will return until it is accepted. In this way the truth becomes the play's moral engine, exposing hypocrisy and offering the possibility of change to those willing to face it.

5

Stephens presents Christopher's relationships with women as a spectrum of understanding. Some women, like Siobhan, meet him on his own terms; others, like his mother Judy, love him intensely but struggle to understand him; and some, like Mrs Gascoyne, initially underestimate him. Through these relationships, Stephens explores what it means to truly care for someone who experiences the world differently, and he suggests that love alone is not enough without patience and understanding.

Question number

Christopher's relationship with Siobhan, his teacher, is the most stable in the play, and Stephens makes it central to the play's form. Siobhan reads aloud from Christopher's book, so that much of the story reaches the audience through her voice. This dramatic device presents her as a mediator between Christopher and the world, and between Christopher and the audience. She also appears in his head at moments of crisis, such as his journey to London, giving calm instructions that help him cope. Her questions, such as "Are you ok?" when he returns, often voice what the audience wants to know, deepening our sense that she is the person who understands him best. She shows a genuine interest in him too, noting "You like your Sherlock Holmes stories", which suggests she values his passions rather than treating them as symptoms. Significantly, it is Siobhan who suggests turning his book into a play, which makes the whole performance a product of their relationship.

Mrs Alexander, an elderly neighbour, offers Christopher a different kind of kindness. Her gentle offer of biscuits once she learns that marzipan is yellow shows her willingness to adapt to his needs: "Perhaps I should bring out some biscuits instead." The tentative "Perhaps" and the question that follows show her trying, carefully, to understand. Structurally, Mrs Alexander is pivotal, because it is she who reveals that Christopher's mother had an affair with Mr Shears. This revelation redirects Christopher's investigation from the death of Wellington to the truth about his own family. Her honesty, though painful, arguably shows more respect for Christopher than the lies told by the adults closest to him.

Christopher's relationship with his mother, Judy, is the most complex and emotionally charged. For much of the first half he believes she has died of a heart attack, so she exists only as an absence. When Christopher finds her letters, her voice enters the play, often spoken aloud as he reads. In one letter she remembers

Question number

how she "used to have dreams" that he would become an astronaut. The past tense is poignant, suggesting she has given up on the life she imagined for him, and perhaps that she felt she failed him. Her letters reveal her frustration and exhaustion, which complicates our view of her: she is loving but flawed, and her decision to leave raises troubling questions about her responsibility.

When Christopher arrives in London, the stage directions reveal Judy's initial lack of understanding: "She goes to hug him. He pushes her away so hard she almost falls over." The physical violence of the moment shows that despite her love, she has forgotten or not fully accepted how Christopher experiences touch. However, Judy becomes fiercely protective. When the London Policeman arrives, she insists, "He's been through enough today", and she defends Christopher against Roger Shears' impatience. Her eventual decision to leave Roger and return to Swindon shows her choosing Christopher, suggesting that their relationship can be repaired through action rather than words.

Mrs Gascoyne, the headteacher, presents a more institutional relationship. She is initially reluctant to allow Christopher to sit his A Level Maths, suggesting that she sees his difficulties rather than his abilities. Her later decision to allow it shows how women in positions of authority can either limit or empower him, and Christopher's triumph in the exam is partly made possible by her change of mind.

At the end of the play, Christopher asks Siobhan whether he can come and live in her house. This request is touching but also revealing: although he now lives with his mother, he still feels most secure with the person who understands him best. Siobhan's gentle refusal reminds him, and the audience, of the boundaries of their relationship. Stephens therefore presents the women in Christopher's life as crucial to his growth, but he also shows that the most meaningful relationships are not

Question number

necessarily the most intimate; they are the ones built on patience and genuine understanding.

6 In The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time, settings are significant not simply as backdrops but as reflections of Christopher's mind. Stephens uses the movement from familiar places in Swindon to the overwhelming spaces of London to chart Christopher's growing courage and independence. Because the play is staged with minimal, often abstract scenery, the audience experiences settings largely through Christopher's perception, so places become emotional as much as physical.

The play opens in Mrs Shears' garden, where Christopher finds Wellington dead with a garden fork through him. This setting is the catalyst for the entire plot. A suburban garden, usually a symbol of order and safety, is transformed into a crime scene, and the image of the fork in the dog immediately establishes a world in which ordinary places can conceal violence and secrets. Christopher's decision to investigate means he keeps returning to the garden, even after his arrest, explaining that he "wanted to see if the fork was in the shed". This shows how his autism leads him to disregard the social boundaries of places, and it also drives the narrative forward, because his persistence in Mrs Shears' street leads indirectly to Mrs Alexander's revelation about his mother.

In the first half of the play, Christopher's world is limited and controlled. He describes it as centred on "home or school, or the bus, or the shop, or the street", and the list, with its repetition of "or", conveys how small and predictable his territory is. He likes familiar places because he has "seen almost everything" in them before and only needs to notice what has changed. Stephens uses this to

Question number

establish the stakes of the second half: if Christopher finds new places so overwhelming, then his journey to London will be an enormous act of bravery.

Home is a significant and shifting setting. At first it seems safe, with Christopher's routines and his pet rat, Toby. However, when he finds his mother's letters hidden in his father's room, home becomes a place of betrayal. Ed's confession that he killed Wellington destroys Christopher's trust completely, and he flees because he fears his father might hurt him. The home, once a refuge, is now dangerous, and this reversal pushes Christopher out into the world.

School, represented largely through Siobhan, is a place of guidance and support. It is where Christopher's intellectual abilities are recognised and where Siobhan helps him shape his experiences into a story. The contrast between school and the police station is striking. At the police station, Christopher is asked to remove his watch, and the stage direction states that he "starts screaming". The verb conveys his distress at being in an unfamiliar institutional space where nobody understands him, highlighting how settings can be hostile when they are not adapted to his needs.

The journey to London is the dramatic and emotional centre of the play's second half. Christopher prepares by drawing diagrams and memorising details such as his mother's address, "London NW2 5NG". The precision of the postcode gives him a sense of control in an uncertain situation. Yet Swindon station, the train and the London Underground overwhelm him with noise, signs and crowds. His description of feeling "like a balloon" inside his chest, so big he finds it hard to breathe, uses a simile to make his panic physical and vivid. On stage, these scenes are often represented through lighting, sound and movement rather than realistic sets, allowing the audience to share his sensory overload. Stephens' form here makes

Question number

setting an expression of feeling.

His mother's flat in London presents a new kind of setting: unfamiliar and cramped, and shared with Mr Shears, who resents Christopher's presence. Christopher feels unsettled there, which helps explain why Judy eventually brings him back to Swindon. The return to familiar places at the end is not a simple return to safety, however. In his old home, Christopher pushes his bed against the door in case his father tries to come in, showing that trust has not been restored. Gradually, through the gift of a puppy, Sandy, Ed begins to rebuild Christopher's sense of security.

Finally, the A Level Maths exam hall represents achievement and a new kind of space Christopher has earned. Stephens structures the play so that Christopher moves from fear of the unknown to the confident belief that he can go to university and live alone. In this way, settings in the play map Christopher's coming of age: by moving through increasingly unfamiliar places, he discovers that he is capable of far more than he imagined.

7 I largely agree that Helga acts with good intentions throughout Kindertransport, because every major decision she makes is driven by love and a desperate wish for her daughter to survive. However, Samuels deliberately complicates this, showing that good intentions do not guarantee good outcomes. Through Evelyn's bitterness and the haunting figure of the Ratcatcher, the play asks whether a mother's love can still be experienced as cruelty, and whether intention matters if the consequences are devastating.

Helga's central action, sending Eva to England on the Kindertransport, is clearly

Question number

motivated by the wish to save her. In the early Hamburg scenes, Samuels shows Helga preparing Eva practically and emotionally for a life without her. She insists that Eva learn to sew on her own buttons, a seemingly small detail that reveals Helga's foresight: she knows Eva will soon have no mother to do it for her. To the child, this seems harsh and impatient, but to the audience it is an act of love disguised as discipline. Samuels contrasts this with Lil, who later sews Eva's hem for her, suggesting that Helga's love is tougher, focused on survival rather than comfort.

Helga's words when she hides jewellery and a watch in Eva's shoes reveal the gravity of her sacrifice: "We old ones invest our future in you." The financial metaphor of investment suggests that Helga sees Eva as the family's only hope, a continuation of their lives beyond the danger they face. Her urgency, expressed in the stark line "There's no later left", conveys her awareness that time has run out. These moments strongly support the view that Helga acts with good intentions; she gives up her own daughter to protect her.

However, Samuels introduces ambiguity through the Ratcatcher. On the night before Eva leaves, Helga reads her the story of the Ratcatcher, who lures children away from their parents. Helga's intention is to comfort her daughter with a familiar story, yet the figure becomes a nightmare that haunts Eva for the rest of her life. Dramatically, the same actor plays the Ratcatcher and various authority figures who threaten Eva, such as the Nazi border official who searches her on the train. This doubling links Helga's choice to send Eva away with the terror of separation. Samuels seems to suggest that even Helga's tender acts have unforeseen and painful effects.

The most powerful challenge to the statement comes from Evelyn's confrontation

Question number

with Helga in Act Two. When Helga finally arrives in England after surviving the camps, Eva, now a teenager who has made herself English, refuses to go with her to New York. In a scene where the adult Evelyn confronts her mother, she accuses her: "You threw me into the sea with all your baggage on my shoulders." The metaphor of "baggage" is double-edged, referring both to the literal suitcase of the Kindertransport and to the emotional burden of carrying her family's survival alone. The verb "threw" suggests violent rejection, as though Helga cast her away. Evelyn's question about what could be "more cruel" than being made to live without her mother turns Helga's sacrifice into an act of abandonment.

Helga's response suggests her intentions remain good but perhaps rigid. She insists that sending Eva away was right because it allowed her to survive, asking her daughter to agree that it is "good to survive". The repeated questioning shows her need for reassurance, but also an inability to see her daughter's pain. When Eva refuses to leave Lil and rejects her Jewish identity, Helga's hurt turns cold, and she leaves alone. Some audiences may feel that, at this point, Helga places her own vision of the family before Eva's needs.

Samuels' structure, which interweaves past and present, intensifies this ambiguity. We see Helga's loving preparations in Hamburg alongside the damaged adult Evelyn, who obsessively cleans and refuses to discuss her past. The audience is therefore invited to judge Helga by both her intentions and their long-term consequences. When Evelyn describes Helga's "razor eyes", she merges her mother with the Ratcatcher, demonising her.

Ultimately, I agree that Helga's intentions are consistently good, but Samuels presents a tragic gap between intention and effect. The final image of the Ratcatcher's shadow covering the stage suggests that, despite Helga's love, the

Question number

trauma of separation can never be undone. Samuels does not blame Helga; rather, she shows that history placed an impossible choice on her, and that even the most loving decision can leave lifelong scars.

8 In Kindertransport, the past is not something that stays behind; it is a living presence that shapes, haunts and threatens the present. Samuels presents Evelyn's attempt to bury her past as both a survival strategy and a source of lasting damage, and through Faith she suggests that the past cannot be escaped, only confronted. The significance of the past is therefore at the core of the play's meaning and is expressed through its structure, its setting and its symbols.

Samuels' structure is central to this. The play interweaves scenes from Eva's childhood in Hamburg and England with scenes of the adult Evelyn and her daughter Faith in the present. Characters from different times often share the stage, so that young Eva and older Evelyn may be present together, and past and present seem to happen simultaneously. This non-linear form allows the audience to see that the past is not finished for Evelyn: it continues to play out in her mind. The overlapping scenes make visible what Evelyn tries hard to hide.

The attic setting reinforces this idea. Faith discovers a box of her mother's old possessions there, including letters, documents and a childhood book, Der Rattenfänger. The attic is a traditional symbol of hidden memories, a space above everyday life where things are stored and forgotten. When Faith brings these objects into the light, she disturbs the careful order of Evelyn's present. Evelyn's panic and her plea to Lil, "Why can't she respect my privacy?", show how threatening the past is to her. The childlike tone of this question suggests that the discovery makes Evelyn regress, as if she becomes the frightened child again.

Question number

The Ratcatcher is the most powerful symbol of the past. Originally a figure in Eva's storybook, he comes to represent everything that separated her from her parents. Because the same actor plays the Ratcatcher and other threatening figures, such as the Nazi border official, the audience sees how a childhood story merges with real persecution in Eva's memory. The Ratcatcher appears throughout the play and his shadow looms over the stage at the end, suggesting that Evelyn will never be free of her past, however much she suppresses it.

Eva's gradual transformation into Evelyn shows the cost of rejecting the past. In England, she slowly gives up hope that her parents will come. Samuels marks this through a powerful stage direction in which Eva takes off her jewellery, including "a chain with a Star of David on it". Removing these objects symbolises not only her loss of hope but also her rejection of her Jewish identity and her parents. Her change of name from Eva to Evelyn and her conversion to Christianity complete this break. As an adult, her obsessive cleaning may suggest an attempt to wipe away any trace of the past, as though she can scrub her history out of existence.

Helga, by contrast, holds fiercely onto the past. When she finally arrives in England, she reminds Eva that she always promised she would come for her. For Helga, the past is a promise to be fulfilled; for Eva, it has become a source of pain to be escaped. Their conflict shows how the same history can mean opposite things to different survivors. Eva's refusal to go with Helga to America confirms her choice to remain in her new life, but the play suggests that this choice comes at a heavy emotional price.

Faith embodies the next generation's need to know the past. She is angry that her mother has hidden the truth, insisting "I want to know about you". Faith realises

Question number

that her mother's past is also her own, as she says "And my grandparents", which shows how history passes from one generation to the next. Her repeated questions, such as asking whether Evelyn admits she was "Eva Schlesinger", show the force of her desire to break the silence. Lil, too, is implicated in the secrecy, having helped Evelyn keep her past hidden for years. Her reluctance to answer Faith at first shows how long the family has lived inside this silence, and how much effort it takes to keep the past buried.

At the end of the play, Faith is determined to contact her relatives, declaring "I want to meet them". Evelyn, however, states with stark finality: "I'd rather die than go back." This short declarative sentence shows that Evelyn's defences remain intact. Yet the looming presence of the Ratcatcher suggests that her refusal cannot protect her. Samuels presents the past as both a wound and an inheritance: it cannot be erased, and the play implies that only by facing it can its power be weakened.

9 I only partly agree with the statement. It seems too harsh to say that Elesin "never" intends to complete his role, because Soyinka presents him at the start as a man who genuinely embraces his destiny and speaks of it with pride. However, the play gradually reveals that his intention is weakened by his love of life, his vanity and his sensual appetites, so that his failure is less a sudden accident caused by Pilkings than the result of a will that was divided from the beginning. Soyinka's tragedy, I would argue, lies in the gap between what Elesin intends and what he is strong enough to do.

At the opening, Elesin's intention appears sincere. The stage directions describe a man who "dances and sings with that infectious enjoyment of life", and his verbal

Question number

sparring with the Praise-Singer in the market place is full of confidence. His story of the Not-I bird is especially revealing. Through a rhythmic, repetitive tale of all the creatures and people who say "Not I" when Death approaches, Elesin sets himself apart from cowards and implies that he alone will walk towards death willingly. The fable is a performance of courage, and the women's admiration suggests the community believes him. His declaration "Life is honour. It ends when honour ends" seems to bind him to the ritual: if he refused to die, his life would lose its meaning.

Yet Soyinka plants doubts in the same scene. The adverb in the stage direction "Suddenly, his attention is caught by an object off-stage" shows how easily Elesin is distracted. The girl he sees is already betrothed to Iyaloja's son, but he insists on marrying her before he dies. It is possible to read this as a sincere wish to leave a seed behind, a link between the living and the unborn, but it is equally possible to read it as a sign that he is clinging to the world of the flesh. Iyaloja's warning, "be sure the seed you leave in it attracts no curse", is dramatic irony: the audience senses that his desire may become the very thing that holds him back. Structurally, Soyinka places the wedding immediately before the hour of death, so that pleasure and duty compete in the same night.

The middle of the play complicates the question, because Elesin's ritual is physically interrupted by Pilkings, who arrests him. On the surface this suggests that Elesin did intend to die and was prevented. However, Soyinka makes us question this. When Olunde returns from England and hears the drums, he assumes without doubt that his father has completed his duty, and the shock when he sees Elesin alive and in chains is all the greater. Olunde's bitter words, "I have no father, eater of left-overs", turn the image of feasting against Elesin, suggesting he has stayed too long at the table of life. The structural contrast

Question number

between father and son is crucial. Olunde, the Westernised son, acts immediately and dies in his father's place, while Elesin, the traditional chief, delays. This reversal implies that the problem was never only the colonial interruption.

Elesin's own confessions in the final act are the strongest evidence for the statement. He tells his young bride that a weight of longing held his limbs to the earth, admitting that the white man was not the only cause. His confessional sentence "First I blamed the white man, then I blamed my gods for deserting me" shows a growing honesty: the list moves from external excuses to the realisation that the fault lies within him. Iyaloja's scorn and the Praise-Singer's accusation that he "sat with folded arms while evil strangers tilted the world from its course" present his failure as passivity. The verb "tilted" suggests the whole cosmic order has been knocked off balance because Elesin did not act when he could. The Praise-Singer's direct address makes the audience feel the weight of collective judgement.

Finally, Elesin strangles himself with his chain after seeing his son's body. This could be read as proof that he always intended to die, and now completes his act. Yet Soyinka makes clear that it comes too late: the moment has passed, and Iyaloja suggests his death now serves no purpose for the King or the community. The ending is therefore bleak rather than redemptive.

Overall, I disagree that Elesin never intends to complete his role, since his early speeches show real conviction. However, I agree that his intention is never strong enough to overcome his attachment to life. Soyinka presents a man who wants honour but also wants the world, and through the interruption by Pilkings he exposes a weakness that was already there. The tragedy is metaphysical as much as political: Elesin fails because the will that should carry him across the threshold

Question number

falters within him.

10 Yoruba traditions are not simply a colourful background in Death and the King's Horseman: they are the very structure of meaning that holds the world of the play together. Soyinka presents the death ritual, the egungun, music, dance and the language of praise as a living system that links the living, the dead and the unborn. Their importance is shown in two ways: through the dignity and beauty with which the Yoruba characters honour them, and through the damage done when those traditions are mocked, misunderstood or broken.

The central tradition is the ritual death of the King's Horseman. Because the King has died, Elesin must follow him within a set time, so that the King does not wander alone and the order of the universe is preserved. Joseph explains it plainly to Pilkings: "the Elesin must die so as to accompany him to heaven". The modal verb "must" shows that, for the community, this is not a choice but an obligation. Soyinka builds the whole play around the single night on which the ritual should take place, so that the tradition shapes the structure itself: every scene either moves towards the moment of death or delays it.

Music, dance and poetry are presented as essential parts of this tradition, not decoration. The play opens in the market with Elesin who "dances and sings with that infectious enjoyment of life", and his exchanges with the Praise-Singer are written in rich, proverbial verse. In his final great speech before his trance he says "Watch me dance along the narrowing path / Glazed by the souls of my great precursors". The image of the "narrowing path" turns death into a journey that he dances, and "precursors" links him to the ancestors who have gone before. The verse form itself echoes the musicality of Yoruba ritual, so that the audience

Question number

experiences the tradition rather than just hearing it described. The drumming that sounds off-stage throughout acts as a structural thread: Joseph recognises it as marking either the death or the wedding of a great chief, showing how music accompanies the key moments of life.

The Praise-Singer is another important tradition. He acts as a living memory of the King and of Elesin's lineage, and at one point even speaks with the dead King's voice, reminding Elesin: "if you cannot come, tell my horse". This shift of voice shows that, in this world, the boundary between the living and the dead is thin and the dead have a real claim on the living. Later, his accusing questions to the chained Elesin show that the tradition also judges those who fail it.

Soyinka makes the importance of the egungun clear through contrast. The Pilkingses wear the ancestral costume to a fancy-dress ball, calling it "fancy dress", a phrase that reduces a sacred garment to entertainment. Amusa, though a Muslim and a police sergeant in colonial service, cannot bring himself to speak to them: "How can man talk against death to person in uniform of death?" His broken English might seem comic, but the question carries real moral force, and his explanation that the costume belongs to the cult of death, "not for human being", shows a respect that the colonial officials lack. Olunde's furious question, "And that is the good cause for which you desecrate an ancestral mask?", uses the verb "desecrate" to remind Jane, and the audience, that the mask is holy. By having characters educated in Western ways, like Olunde, defend the tradition, Soyinka suggests that its value is not a matter of ignorance or superstition.

Marriage and the market women also reflect Yoruba customs. Elesin's wish to take a new bride on his final night draws on the tradition that great men take many wives and leave a seed for the future. Iyaloja agrees out of respect for his status,

Question number

showing how the community honours its Horseman. Yet she also warns him about the "seed" he leaves, and the bride's silent presence later becomes a reminder of how his desire interrupted his duty. The tradition is therefore shown as something that must be respected in its proper order.

Finally, the importance of the death ritual is proved by what happens when it fails. Olunde dies in his father's place to save the honour of the lineage, and Elesin strangles himself too late. The Praise-Singer's image of strangers who have "tilted the world from its course" suggests a cosmic disaster, not a personal one. Iyaloja's closing instruction to turn towards the unborn shows the community trying to repair the broken link. Soyinka therefore presents Yoruba traditions as vital, coherent and deeply meaningful: they give shape to death, dignity to life and continuity to the community, and when they are disregarded the result is tragedy.

11

Shakespeare presents the relationship between Romeo and Friar Lawrence as a close, almost father and son bond, built on trust and affection, but also as a relationship of tension between youthful passion and cautious wisdom. The Friar is the one adult Romeo truly confides in, yet the advice and help he offers, however well meant, become part of the chain of events that leads to the tragedy. Shakespeare seems to suggest that even wise counsel cannot restrain impulsive love, and that a mentor who bends the rules to help may share in the guilt of what follows.

From their first scene together in Act 2 Scene 3, the relationship is warm and teasing. Romeo arrives at dawn, and the Friar's first words, "Young son, it argues a distempered head / So soon to bid good morrow to thy bed", combine concern with gentle humour. The address "Young son" establishes a paternal role, which is

Question number

striking because Romeo never speaks to his own father on stage. When Romeo reveals his new love, the Friar exclaims "Holy Saint Francis, what a change is here!" and mocks him for forgetting Rosaline so quickly: "Young men's love then lies / Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes". The rhyming couplet makes the criticism sound like a proverb, giving the Friar the voice of experience. Yet the relationship is also one of mutual liking: the Friar earlier reminds Romeo that he scolded him "For doting, not for loving, pupil mine", and the word "pupil" suggests he sees himself as a teacher.

The Friar's motive for agreeing to marry the lovers reveals both his goodness and his weakness. He hopes "this alliance may so happy prove / To turn your households' rancour to pure love". The contrast between "rancour" and "pure love" shows his idealism: he sees the marriage as a means of ending the feud, a political act as much as a personal one. However, his warning "Wisely and slow; they stumble that run fast" exposes the gap between his advice and his actions, because he agrees to a secret marriage that very same day. In Act 2 Scene 6 he warns that "These violent delights have violent ends", and the repetition of "violent" foreshadows the tragedy. Because the Prologue has already told the audience that the lovers will "take their life", the Friar's caution creates dramatic irony: we know his fears are justified, but he goes ahead anyway.

The relationship is tested most powerfully after Romeo kills Tybalt. In Act 3 Scene 3, Romeo hides in the Friar's cell and responds to the news of banishment with despair, calling it torture and claiming the Friar cuts his head off "with a golden axe". He even rejects the Friar's comfort: "Hang up philosophy!" and "Thou canst not speak of that thou dost not feel". Here Shakespeare shows a clash between age and youth, reason and emotion. The Friar's patience snaps and he rebukes Romeo sharply: "Art thou a man? Thy form cries out thou art: / Thy tears are

Question number

womanish". The rhetorical question and the contrast between Romeo's form and his tears show the Friar shaming him into action. Then, in a long speech, he lists Romeo's blessings and sends him to Juliet, telling him to "Ascend her chamber" before fleeing to Mantua. The Friar's authority restores Romeo, showing how dependent Romeo is on him.

To an Elizabethan audience, the Friar's role would have been ambiguous. In Protestant England, Catholic friars were often regarded with suspicion, especially after the Catholic plots against Elizabeth. A friar conducting secret marriages and dispensing potions might have confirmed fears of Catholic secrecy. On the other hand, clergy were expected to offer guidance and help to those in trouble, and some friars were known for their knowledge of herbs. His opening soliloquy on plants, "Within the infant rind of this weak flower / Poison hath residence, and medicine power", presents him as a man of learning and also foreshadows the double nature of his help: the potion he gives Juliet is meant to heal but ends in death.

By the end, the relationship breaks down through bad timing and the Friar's own fear. His letter never reaches Romeo, and in the tomb he flees, saying "I dare no longer stay", leaving Juliet alone. This moment undermines his role as protector. Yet structurally Shakespeare gives him the final explanation, and he admits his part openly, so that the Prince declares "We still have known thee for a holy man". The families learn the truth only through him, and their reconciliation follows.

Overall, Shakespeare presents Romeo and the Friar as bound by genuine love and trust, but their relationship reflects the play's central conflict between haste and patience. The Friar's wisdom is real, yet his willingness to act in secret makes him both Romeo's best friend and an unwitting agent of fate.

Question number

12

In Romeo and Juliet, Shakespeare presents forgiveness as something precious but fragile, offered most readily by those who love and refused by those consumed by pride and honour. The tragedy grows out of an "ancient grudge" that nobody is willing to forgive, and it ends only when forgiveness arrives too late, paid for with the lives of the young. Shakespeare seems to suggest that a society which values revenge over mercy will destroy its own future.

The Prologue establishes the absence of forgiveness at the heart of Verona. The "ancient grudge" breaks out into "new mutiny", and the sonnet form, usually associated with love, is used to describe hatred and death. Interestingly, Shakespeare never tells us what caused the feud, which suggests that the original offence no longer matters: the families have simply forgotten how to forgive. The opening brawl, begun by servants over a gesture, shows how the grudge has spread through every level of society. The Prince's warning, "If ever you disturb our streets again, / Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace", uses grave, absolute language, presenting the law as the only force strong enough to hold back revenge.

Tybalt is the clearest example of a character who will not forgive at all. In his very first scene he answers Benvolio's call for peace with a declaration of hatred: "I hate the word, / As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee". The simile binds the very word peace to hell, showing how completely he rejects reconciliation. At the Capulet feast he recognises Romeo's voice and wants to fight, vowing that killing him would be no "sin". In contrast, Lord Capulet shows a surprising willingness to tolerate his enemy: "Content thee, gentle coz, let him alone", even praising Romeo as a "virtuous and well-govern'd youth". This juxtaposition shows that forgiveness was possible, but Tybalt's parting threat that this intrusion shall turn to "bitter

Question number

gall" foreshadows the violence to come. To an Elizabethan audience, who knew that duelling was common among young gentlemen and that refusing a challenge could be seen as weakness, Tybalt's code of honour would have been recognisable, yet Shakespeare exposes it as deadly.

Romeo, newly married to Juliet, tries to offer forgiveness in Act 3 Scene 1. He refuses Tybalt's insults, insisting he loves him "better than thou canst devise". His attempt at peace is misunderstood by Mercutio as "calm, dishonourable, vile submission", and after Mercutio is killed under Romeo's arm, Romeo abandons forgiveness and kills Tybalt. Mercutio's curse, "A plague o' both your houses!", repeated three times, condemns both families for a feud neither will forgive. Structurally, this scene is the turning point: the moment forgiveness fails, the comedy of the first half turns into tragedy.

The Prince's response shows that forgiveness can also be a political judgement. Although he had decreed death for fighting, he banishes Romeo instead. Lady Capulet demands "Romeo slew Tybalt, Romeo must not live", but the Prince reflects that "Mercy but murders, pardoning those that kill". This paradox reveals the tension in his position: too much mercy encourages violence. In Shakespeare's time, rulers had the power to execute or banish without trial, so the Prince's choice would have been seen as an act of measured clemency. Friar Lawrence calls it "dear mercy", while Romeo cannot see it as forgiveness at all.

Juliet is the character who forgives most quickly and most fully. Hearing that Romeo has killed Tybalt, she bursts into a series of oxymorons: "O serpent heart, hid with a flowering face!" The clash of images shows her shock and sense of betrayal. Yet within moments she rebukes herself: "Shall I speak ill of him that is my husband?" Her love allows her to see past the act to the person, echoing her

Question number

earlier question "What's in a name?" which already rejected the hatred attached to the Montague name. By contrast, Lord Capulet, who forgave Romeo at the feast, refuses to forgive his own daughter when she resists marriage to Paris, calling her a "disobedient wretch". In a patriarchal society where daughters owed obedience to fathers, his anger might seem natural to an Elizabethan audience, but its brutality makes him less sympathetic. When Juliet pretends to beg his pardon, he forgives her instantly and brings the wedding forward, an irony that hastens the catastrophe.

In the final scene, forgiveness finally arrives. Romeo asks the dead Tybalt "Forgive me, cousin", and Capulet offers his hand: "O brother Montague, give me thy hand". The word "brother" transforms enemies into family. Yet the Prince's verdict, "All are punish'd", and his statement that "Some shall be pardon'd, and some punished", remind the audience that this forgiveness has come at a terrible cost. The peace is "glooming", not joyful. Shakespeare therefore suggests that forgiveness is the only cure for hatred, but that pride delays it until it can no longer save anyone.

13 Masculinity is one of the central forces driving the tragedy of Macbeth. Shakespeare presents a world in which manhood is defined by courage and violence, and in which characters use the idea of being "a man" as a weapon to manipulate others. Macbeth's line "I dare do all that may become a man" suggests that true manhood has moral limits, yet the play shows him crossing those limits under pressure. Through contrasts with Macduff, Banquo and Lady Macbeth, Shakespeare questions whether masculinity means brutality or the capacity to feel, and suggests that a distorted idea of manhood leads to destruction.

At the start of the play, masculinity is linked with heroic violence in battle. The

Question number

Captain describes Macbeth carving his passage through the enemy until he "unseam'd him from the nave to the chaps", a gruesome image that the court receives with admiration. Ross calls him "Bellona's bridegroom", a metaphor that marries Macbeth to the Roman goddess of war, presenting him as the ideal masculine warrior. In Jacobean society, where men were often judged by their courage and to die in battle for one's country was seen as honourable, this violence is acceptable because it serves the king. Shakespeare establishes a definition of manhood that is admirable but dangerous, since the same skill in killing can be turned against Duncan himself.

Lady Macbeth exploits this ideal ruthlessly. In Act I Scene 7, when Macbeth declares "We will proceed no further in this business", she attacks his manhood: "When you durst do it, then you were a man". The repetition of "man" in her following lines, insisting he would be "so much more the man", equates masculinity with daring to murder. Macbeth's reply, "I dare do all that may become a man; / Who dares do more is none", is crucial. He argues that a real man knows where to stop, and that going beyond moral limits makes one less than human. Structurally, though, his resistance collapses within the scene, showing how fragile his own definition is against her mockery. Lady Macbeth even claims she would have "dash'd the brains out" of her nursing baby rather than break such a promise. For a Jacobean audience who saw women as nurturers and givers of life, this image would have been deeply shocking, inverting the natural order.

Lady Macbeth's own view of gender reinforces the idea that violence is masculine. In her soliloquy she calls on spirits to "unsex me here" and to "take my milk for gall", believing that femininity, associated with compassion, must be destroyed for her to act. Earlier she fears that Macbeth is "too full o' th' milk of human kindness", linking his goodness to a maternal image. Shakespeare implies that both

Question number

characters accept a narrow view where tenderness is weakness, and this shared belief drives them to murder. Macbeth's admiring response, "Bring forth men-children only", shows that he too measures worth by "undaunted mettle", a pun on metal that suggests hardness.

Once king, Macbeth uses the same manipulation on others. Persuading the murderers to kill Banquo, he sneers that "in the catalogue ye go for men", comparing them to dogs of different breeds. He has learned his wife's tactic of questioning manhood to provoke violence. At the banquet, when he sees Banquo's ghost, Lady Macbeth asks "Are you a man?", and Macbeth insists "What man dare, I dare", trying to recover his courage. The repetition of "dare" from Act I shows how far he has fallen: daring is no longer limited by what "may become a man" but has become reckless defiance.

Shakespeare offers an alternative model of masculinity through Macduff. When he hears that his wife and children have been murdered, Malcolm urges him to "Dispute it like a man". Macduff's reply, "I shall do so; / But I must also feel it as a man", redefines masculinity to include grief and love. This is perhaps the moral centre of the play's exploration of manhood: a real man can weep and still fight. His grief shows that he values his family in a way Macbeth no longer can.

By the end, Macbeth's masculinity has become empty bravado. Relying on the prophecy that no man "of woman born" can harm him, he fights on even after learning Macduff was "untimely ripp'd" from his mother's womb, crying "Lay on, Macduff". There is something of the old warrior here, yet he dies a "butcher", not a hero. Shakespeare structures the play so that Macbeth begins and ends in battle, but the meaning of his violence has changed completely.

Question number

Overall, masculinity is significant because it is the pressure point through which Macbeth is manipulated and the measure by which his fall is judged. Shakespeare suggests that manhood defined only by violence leads to tyranny, while true manhood, like Macduff's, combines courage with feeling.

14 Shakespeare surrounds Macbeth with characters who influence him in different ways: the witches plant the idea of kingship, Lady Macbeth drives him to act on it, Duncan unknowingly provokes him, and Banquo both restrains and threatens him. Yet Shakespeare presents these influences as working on something already present in Macbeth. The play invites the audience to ask how far Macbeth is led and how far he chooses, and I would argue that the influences are powerful precisely because they speak to his own "black and deep desires".

The witches are the first and most mysterious influence. Their greeting, "All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!", uses a confident declarative and the future tense, presenting kingship as certain. The triple structure of their greetings, Glamis, Cawdor and king, builds a pattern that seems to prove itself when Ross immediately announces that Macbeth is Thane of Cawdor. Shakespeare shows the effect at once in Macbeth's aside: "why do I yield to that suggestion / Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair". The verb "yield" suggests he is already surrendering, and the "horrid image" shows that murder has entered his mind unprompted by the witches, who never mention killing. Banquo's warning that "instruments of darkness tell us truths, / Win us with honest trifles, to betray's / In deepest consequence" provides a contrasting response, showing that the same influence can be resisted. For a Jacobean audience, and for King James I, who had written Daemonologie and believed witches were agents of the devil, the witches would have seemed genuinely dangerous, capable of leading a soul to damnation.

Question number

Duncan influences Macbeth without intending to. Macbeth declares his loyalty, "our duties / Are to your throne and state", but when Duncan names Malcolm Prince of Cumberland, Macbeth sees "a step / On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap". His aside "Stars, hide your fires; / Let not light see my black and deep desires" shows how Duncan's decision provokes his hidden ambition. Ironically, Duncan's trust, shown in his admission that he once built "an absolute trust" on the traitor Cawdor, makes him vulnerable to a second betrayal. Shakespeare's structure, placing this naïve praise just before Macbeth enters, emphasises the dramatic irony.

Lady Macbeth is the most direct and forceful influence. On reading Macbeth's letter, she reveals her fear: "Yet do I fear thy nature; / It is too full o' the milk of human kindness". The soliloquy form lets the audience see her plans before Macbeth does, and her wish to "pour my spirits in thine ear" presents persuasion as a kind of poisoning. When Macbeth tells her "We will proceed no further in this business", the short, decisive line seems final, yet she breaks his resolve by attacking his manhood: "When you durst do it, then you were a man". She also gives him practical guidance, telling him to "look like th' innocent flower, / But be the serpent under't", a biblical image recalling the serpent in Eden which casts her as a tempter. In a patriarchal society where wives were expected to obey their husbands, her dominance would have shocked an audience, and it reinforces the sense of an unnatural world. After the murder, her calm advice, "These deeds must not be thought / After these ways; so, it will make us mad", shows her trying to control his mind, though the line ironically foreshadows her own madness.

As the play progresses, however, Lady Macbeth's influence declines. Macbeth plans Banquo's murder without her, telling her to "Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest

Question number

chuck". The affectionate "chuck" masks the fact that he now excludes her. This structural shift shows Macbeth becoming his own driving force.

Banquo influences Macbeth through fear and through example. Macbeth admits "Our fears in Banquo / Stick deep" and says that under him "My genius is rebuked", showing that Banquo's goodness makes him feel his own guilt. The prophecy that Banquo's descendants will be kings torments Macbeth, who complains of a "fruitless crown", and this drives him to murder his friend. Banquo's ghost at the feast is a powerful theatrical device, making Macbeth's guilt visible to the audience while his guests see nothing.

Finally, Macbeth returns to the witches by choice. The apparitions tell him to "Be bloody, bold, and resolute" and that "none of woman born / Shall harm Macbeth". The tricolon of adjectives in this command echoes his own violent mood, suggesting the witches simply amplify what he already wants. Their equivocation gives him false confidence, and only when Macduff reveals his birth does Macbeth curse the "juggling fiends" who deceived him.

In conclusion, Shakespeare presents a range of characters who influence Macbeth, but each influence works because Macbeth is willing to listen. The witches tempt, Lady Macbeth persuades, Duncan provokes and Banquo haunts, yet the decisive choices remain Macbeth's. Shakespeare thus warns his audience that evil influence can only succeed where ambition already lies waiting.

15 Portia behaves in strikingly different ways across The Merchant of Venice, and Shakespeare uses these contrasts to show a woman of great intelligence working within, and sometimes around, the limits of a patriarchal world. At Belmont she is

Question number

a dutiful daughter who chafes against her father's will, a witty and sometimes cruel judge of her suitors, and a loving, apparently submissive bride. In Venice, disguised as a man, she becomes the most powerful figure in the court. Her behaviour suggests that Shakespeare admired female wit, while also showing that she can only exercise real power when she hides her identity as a woman.

When we first meet Portia, she is restless and frustrated: "By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is aweary of this great world". The contrast between "little body" and "great world" captures her sense of confinement. She explains that "the will of a living daughter" is "curbed by the will of a dead father", and the pun on "will", meaning both desire and legal testament, shows that her own wishes are controlled by her father's command. Yet she obeys. She insists that she will remain as chaste as Diana unless she is won "by the manner of my father's will". In Elizabethan society, daughters were regarded as the property of their fathers until they became the property of their husbands, and an audience might have admired her obedience. However, her open complaints suggest a mind that questions the system even as she submits to it.

With Nerissa, Portia's behaviour is lively and comic. Her prose mockery of the suitors is full of sharp wit: she would "rather be married to a death's-head with a bone in his mouth" than to the County Palatine. Nerissa is her confidante, giving her a space to speak freely. This outspoken humour would have been unusual in a woman of the time and was probably designed to provoke laughter. However, her wit can also be uncomfortable for a modern audience. Of the Prince of Morocco she says that if he has "the complexion of a devil" she would rather he heard her confession than married her, and after he fails she remarks "Let all of his complexion choose me so". This reveals a prejudice that reflects attitudes of Shakespeare's time but complicates our admiration for her.

Question number

Her behaviour changes completely with Bassanio. She urges him to "pause a day or two / Before you hazard", and her speech becomes hesitant and confused as she admits "One half of me is yours, the other half yours, / Mine own, I would say". The repetition and self-correction show a woman overwhelmed by love. Some readers argue that the song played while he chooses, with rhymes on "bred" and "head" that echo "lead", is a hint, suggesting that Portia bends her father's rules without openly breaking them. After his success, she describes herself as "an unlessoned girl, unschooled, unpractised", and hands over everything she owns: "This house, these servants, and this same myself / Are yours". The list moves from property to her own person, enacting the legal reality that a wife's possessions passed to her husband. Yet the audience knows how clever she is, so her modest language may be partly a performance of the expected wifely role.

In the trial scene, Portia's behaviour reaches its climax. Disguised as the young lawyer Balthazar, she takes control of the court. Her speech beginning "The quality of mercy is not strained" uses the image of mercy dropping "as the gentle rain from heaven" to present it as a divine gift. She first gives Shylock every chance to show mercy, but when he refuses, she turns the law against him with a single precise distinction: "This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood". The short, decisive phrase "Tarry a little; there is something else" marks the structural turning point of the play, reversing Shylock's triumph. Since women could not practise law in Shakespeare's England, her brilliance in court would have seemed remarkable, and the disguise allows Shakespeare to suggest that a woman's intelligence can equal or exceed a man's. Yet her treatment of Shylock is also merciless in its own way, which raises questions about her Christian virtue.

Finally, Portia uses the ring plot to test Bassanio's loyalty. Still disguised, she asks

Question number

for the ring he swore never to part with, and in Act 5 she teases him playfully, using puns such as "Let me give light, but let me not be light" to play on brightness and sexual looseness. The ring test lets her assert some power within the marriage, reminding Bassanio that his promises to her matter.

Overall, Portia behaves with wit, loyalty, love and authority, adapting her behaviour to the roles available to her. Shakespeare presents her as perhaps the most capable character in the play, yet her behaviour also exposes how tightly women's lives were controlled, since she can only reveal her full power behind a male disguise.

16 Loss runs through The Merchant of Venice, from Antonio's unexplained sadness in the opening line to Shylock's complete ruin in the trial scene. Shakespeare explores loss of money, loss of love, loss of family and loss of identity, and the play is built on the idea of risk: characters "hazard" what they have in the hope of gain. Although it is a comedy that ends in marriages and restored fortunes, Shakespeare suggests that the happiness of some characters is built on the losses of others, and that some losses can never be repaired.

The play opens with a strange sense of loss before anything has happened. Antonio's first words are "In sooth I know not why I am so sad". His melancholy has no clear cause, though his friends suggest his ships at sea are on his mind. Later he describes the world as "A stage where every man must play a part, / And mine a sad one". The theatrical metaphor suggests that Antonio feels destined for loss. Perhaps his sadness anticipates losing Bassanio to Portia. His willingness to borrow money and risk his flesh so that Bassanio can court her shows that he is prepared to lose everything for his friend.

Question number

The central plot is driven by the threat of physical and financial loss. Antonio's bond with Shylock means that if he cannot repay three thousand ducats, he will lose a pound of flesh. When news comes that his ships have been wrecked, the comic tone darkens. Structurally, the reported loss of the argosies is what turns the merry bond into a matter of life and death. Antonio's resigned line "I am a tainted wether of the flock, / Meetest for death" presents him as a sacrificial animal, accepting his loss with an almost Christ-like passivity. To an Elizabethan audience, who knew that merchants commonly relied on loans and partnerships to cover losses at sea, and who often saw risk in a venture as adding to its nobility, Antonio's danger might appear both realistic and admirable.

Shylock suffers the greatest and most painful losses. First he loses his servant Lancelot, who jokes that he is so famished in Shylock's service that "you may tell every finger I have with my ribs". Then he loses his daughter. Jessica's couplet as she leaves, "I have a father, you a daughter, lost", is cleverly balanced: the loss is shared, but she seems untroubled by it. Shylock's reaction is reported mockingly by Solanio, who imitates him crying "My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!" The repetition and confusion of daughter and ducats suggest that Shylock values money as much as his child, and the Christians laugh at his grief. Yet Shakespeare complicates this. When Tubal tells him that Jessica traded a ring for a monkey, Shylock responds: "I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor. I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys". The turquoise was a gift from his dead wife, so this is a loss of memory and love, not merely of property. The phrase "wilderness of monkeys" makes him, for a moment, deeply human.

In the trial scene, Shylock loses everything. Portia's interpretation of the bond reverses his position, and he is stripped of his wealth and forced to become a

Question number

Christian. His reply, "Nay, take my life and all, pardon not that", followed by the metaphor that taking his means of living is taking his house and his life, shows that for him this "mercy" is worse than death. The loss of his religion is perhaps the cruellest, as it takes away his identity. A contemporary audience, in a society where Jews were widely vilified and officially banned from England, would probably have seen this as just and even generous. A modern audience is more likely to see it as a tragic loss that casts a shadow over the comedy, especially as Shylock simply leaves, saying "I am not well".

Loss also shapes the romantic plot. The casket test forces suitors to "hazard all", and Morocco and Aragon lose their chance of marriage. The ring plot plays with loss in a lighter way. Portia warns Bassanio that if he should lose or give away her ring, it will "presage the ruin of your love". When he gives it to the disguised lawyer, the apparent loss creates comic tension in Act 5, which is resolved when the rings are revealed to be safe.

The ending seems to undo many losses. Antonio learns that three of his argosies have suddenly come safely to harbour, and the lovers are reunited. Yet Antonio remains alone while the couples pair off, and Shylock's losses are never reversed. Shakespeare therefore presents loss as the engine of the play, and suggests that in a world governed by trade and risk, the gains of the Christian characters depend on the losses of the outsider.

17 Elizabeth Bennet develops from a witty, confident young woman who trusts her own quick judgements into someone who recognises the limits of her perception and learns to value humility. Austen does not change Elizabeth's essential spirit, however: her independence remains, but it is tempered by self-knowledge. Through

Question number

this development Austen explores what a good marriage should be in a society where, for women of the gentry, marriage was less a romantic choice than an economic necessity.

At the start of the novel, Elizabeth is introduced as having "a lively, playful disposition, which delighted in anything ridiculous". The verb "delighted" suggests that she enjoys observing other people's follies, and it is this pleasure in amusement that makes her vulnerable. When Darcy dismisses her at the Meryton assembly as "tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me", she turns the insult into a comic story for her friends. Her response seems admirably resilient, yet Austen hints that her wit is also a defence: she later admits that she could easily forgive his pride "if he had not mortified mine". The structure of this balanced sentence, setting his pride against hers, suggests that the two characters are more alike than either realises, and that Elizabeth's judgement is coloured by wounded vanity from the very beginning.

Elizabeth's early independence is shown most clearly through her refusals. She rejects Mr Collins, telling him "you could not make me happy", even though his inheritance of Longbourn under the entail would secure her family's future. In Regency England, when daughters of a gentleman could not inherit their father's estate, such a refusal was a bold, almost reckless act, and Austen sharpens it by contrasting Elizabeth with Charlotte Lucas, who accepts Collins because she asks "only a comfortable home". Elizabeth's shock at Charlotte's choice is understandable, but it also reveals a certain naivety about the pressures facing a plain woman of twenty-seven with no fortune. Austen seems to admire Elizabeth's principles while quietly showing that they are a luxury.

The turning point in Elizabeth's development comes through form. Darcy's first

Question number

proposal, which begins "In vain have I struggled. It will not do", is met with her furious declaration that he is "the last man in the world whom I could ever be prevailed on to marry". Yet the letter that follows forces her to reread the past. Austen cleverly reproduces the letter in full, so the reader reads it alongside Elizabeth, and then follows her response through free indirect discourse. Letters were a familiar device in eighteenth century fiction for revealing inner feeling, but here the letter is used to reveal a reader's mind changing. Elizabeth recognises that she has been "blind" and "absurd" about both Darcy and Wickham, and the climax of her self-reproach, "Till this moment I never knew myself", is the emotional centre of the novel. Her development is not simply a change of opinion about Darcy, but a discovery of herself. The irony is pointed: the woman who prided herself on reading others has failed to read herself.

Austen then structures the second half of the novel so that Elizabeth's new understanding is tested by evidence rather than charm. At Pemberley, the housekeeper's praise of Darcy, the elegant but not showy grounds and his courteous treatment of the Gardiners all contribute to her changed view. Her feelings are expressed in a carefully graded list: "She respected, she esteemed, she was grateful to him". The measured, rational verbs show that her love grows from respect and gratitude, not infatuation, which contrasts directly with Lydia's thoughtless elopement with Wickham. Austen appears to suggest that the ideal marriage combines affection with judgement.

By the end, Elizabeth retains her spirit. When Lady Catherine de Bourgh tries to forbid the match, Elizabeth insists that she will act only in the way that will "constitute my happiness", a remarkable assertion of female autonomy in front of a woman of much higher rank. Here Austen's criticism of aristocratic snobbery is clear, and Elizabeth's development has given her a confidence based on

Question number

understanding, not prejudice. Yet she has also learned restraint: when tempted to tease Darcy, she remembers that "he had yet to learn to be laughed at, and it was rather too early to begin". The narrator's affectionate humour shows that Elizabeth's playfulness survives, but it is now governed by sensitivity to others.

Ultimately, Elizabeth's development is gradual, as she herself admits to Jane that her love "has been coming on so gradually, that I hardly know when it began". Austen presents her growth as a movement from quick, proud judgement to patient self-awareness, while allowing her to keep the wit and independence that made her attractive to Darcy and to the reader. Her marriage rewards this growth with both love and financial security, which perhaps suggests Austen's view that in a society governed by money, the happiest women were those who refused to let money alone decide their future.

18 Misunderstandings are the engine of Pride and Prejudice. Austen's original title, First Impressions, shows how central the idea was to her, and almost every major plot strand depends on a character misreading another. Yet misunderstandings are significant not only because they drive the plot: they allow Austen to explore how pride, vanity and social prejudice distort judgement, and to suggest that true understanding, especially in marriage, must be earned through reflection rather than assumed.

The first and most important misunderstanding grows from the Meryton assembly. Darcy's refusal to dance and his remark that Elizabeth is "tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me" lead the whole neighbourhood to decide that he is proud and disagreeable. Mrs Bennet's verdict, that he is rude and haughty, is typical of a community that judges by surface manners and rank. Austen's

Question number

narrator, however, gently signals that the judgement is premature, since Darcy's reserve partly stems from discomfort among strangers. The significance is that Elizabeth's view of him is fixed by wounded pride in a single evening. Even Darcy recognises her tendency, telling her that her defect is "wilfully to misunderstand" people, and the adverb "wilfully" suggests that misunderstanding is not innocent error but a choice shaped by vanity.

Austen then uses Wickham to deepen this misunderstanding. His easy charm makes Elizabeth trust his account of being cheated of the living left to him by Darcy's father. His dramatic language, accusing Darcy of "such injustice, such inhumanity", relies on emotional exaggeration rather than evidence, and the triplet in his complaint sounds rehearsed. Elizabeth accepts his story because it confirms what she already wants to believe. Austen's structure here is ironic: the reader, too, is invited to like Wickham, so that when the truth emerges we share Elizabeth's embarrassment. In a society where reputation depended on appearance and politeness, Austen seems to warn that "happy manners" can conceal a lack of principle.

A parallel misunderstanding affects Jane and Bingley. Jane's calm, modest behaviour, which matches the expectation that a young lady should not display her feelings too openly, leads Darcy to conclude that she is not seriously attached. Ironically, Charlotte Lucas had warned early on that a woman who hides her affection too skilfully may lose the man she loves. Bingley, influenced by his sisters and by Darcy, leaves Netherfield, and the narrative strand of Jane's quiet heartbreak shows that misunderstandings have real emotional costs. Austen also suggests that class snobbery plays a part: the Bingley sisters are quick to criticise the Bennets' vulgar relations, as when Miss Bingley mocks Elizabeth for arriving at Netherfield with muddy petticoats after walking to nurse her sister. What Miss

Question number

Bingley interprets as poor manners is actually sisterly love, which shows how upper class prejudice can turn virtue into a fault.

The significance of misunderstandings reaches its height in Darcy's first proposal. Each character misreads the other completely; Darcy assumes he will be accepted, while Elizabeth believes he has ruined both Wickham and Jane. Her description of him as "the last man in the world whom I could ever be prevailed on to marry" is the climax of the novel's early misjudgements. Austen then resolves the confusion through the letter. Although Pride and Prejudice is not an epistolary novel, Austen uses letters frequently, reflecting the popularity of that form in the eighteenth century, and Darcy's letter allows him to explain himself privately and honestly, something polite conversation could not achieve. Elizabeth's response, "I, who have prided myself on my discernment!", is ironic and painful, since the exclamation shows how her confidence in her own judgement was the very source of her error.

Structurally, the second half of the novel undoes these misunderstandings step by step. At Pemberley, Elizabeth sees Darcy through the eyes of his housekeeper and servants, and later learns that he has secretly arranged Lydia's marriage to Wickham. Even Lady Catherine's interference, intended to prevent the match, creates a new misunderstanding that turns out to be helpful, since her report of Elizabeth's refusal to promise anything gives Darcy hope. Austen's comic irony here suggests that misreadings can sometimes lead people towards the truth.

Ultimately, misunderstandings are significant because they make the final union between Elizabeth and Darcy convincing. A marriage based on first impressions would be as shallow as that of Mr and Mrs Bennet, who married on the strength of youth and beauty and now share little respect. By contrast, Elizabeth and Darcy have to recognise their own pride and prejudice before they can understand

Question number

each other. Austen, often critical of the assumptions of the gentry, seems to argue that judgement must rest on knowledge of character rather than on rank, rumour or manners, and the misunderstandings of the novel are the painful but necessary means by which her characters learn this.

19 Joe Gargery is the moral centre of Great Expectations. Dickens presents him as a man whose goodness has nothing to do with wealth, education or social rank, and by placing him beside Pip, who chases gentility, he suggests that true worth lies in loyalty, humility and love. Because the novel is narrated by an older Pip looking back with regret, Joe's goodness is seen through the eyes of someone who once failed to value it, which makes it all the more powerful.

From the opening chapters, Joe is defined by gentleness in a harsh household. Pip is "brought up by hand" by Mrs Joe, a phrase that grimly suggests beating as much as feeding, and Joe is often a fellow victim of her temper. The adult narrator describes him as "a mild, good-natured, sweet-tempered, easy-going, foolish, dear fellow". The long list of adjectives builds a warm, affectionate portrait, while "foolish" adds a note of honest humour, and the narrator continues that he was "a sort of Hercules in strength, and also in weakness". This paradox is central: Joe's great physical strength is matched by a moral refusal to use it against others. Later he explains that his own father beat his mother, and he would rather put up with Mrs Joe than risk treating a woman as his father did. Dickens thus presents Joe's apparent weakness as a deliberate moral choice.

Joe's goodness is also shown through his love for Pip. He tells Pip that when he married his sister he insisted there was room for the boy at the forge, showing that he chose to take in an orphan who was not his own. Their shared phrase,

Question number

"ever the best of friends", and Joe's hopeful "what larks" become a refrain throughout the novel, reminding the reader of the simple companionship Pip later abandons. Dickens structures these repetitions so that each return to them feels more painful, since Pip's progress towards being a gentleman is measured by his growing distance from Joe.

The middle section of the novel tests Joe's goodness most severely. When he visits Pip in London, he is awkward in his best clothes, keeps calling Pip "sir" and struggles with his hat, and Pip is ashamed of him. Dickens uses comedy here, but the reader's laughter is uncomfortable because Pip's embarrassment is so unkind. Joe's dignity emerges in his farewell speech: "Pip, dear old chap, life is made of ever so many partings welded together". The metaphor of welding comes from his own trade, so his wisdom is expressed in the language of the forge, suggesting that his moral understanding grows naturally out of honest labour. He adds that he is "wrong" in London clothes and belongs at the forge, recognising the class divide that Pip refuses to admit. Dickens, who had experienced childhood poverty and the shame of working in a blacking factory, seems to understand both Pip's longing to rise and the cost of disowning one's origins.

Context deepens this contrast. In Victorian Britain, the idea of the gentleman was increasingly linked to money rather than birth, and Dickens questions whether wealth can make a man good. Pip's fortune, it turns out, comes from a transported convict, a shocking origin for Victorian readers, while Joe, a poor blacksmith, behaves with more true gentility than anyone in London. Herbert's father even remarks that no man who was not a true gentleman at heart was ever a true gentleman in manner, and Joe embodies the first half of that idea.

Joe's goodness is most fully revealed near the end. When Pip falls ill and is

Question number

arrested for debt, it is Joe who nurses him and quietly pays what he owes. When Pip begs forgiveness, Joe replies: "God knows as I forgive you, if I have anythink to forgive". The dialect spelling "anythink" reminds us of his lack of education, yet the sentiment is profoundly Christian, and the conditional "if" shows that he does not even regard himself as wronged. For a Victorian readership that valued charity and forgiveness as religious duties, Joe would have seemed an almost ideal model of Christian virtue. Notably, he leaves before Pip has fully recovered, as if not wishing to burden him with gratitude, and the note he leaves shows his tact and self-effacement.

Finally, Joe's marriage to Biddy and the birth of their son, named Pip, suggest that goodness is rewarded with domestic happiness and renewal. Dickens offers this as a quiet contrast to the ruined lives of Miss Havisham and the cold marriage of Estella and Drummle. Overall, Joe is presented as morally good not because he is perfect or clever, but because he is consistently loyal, forgiving and selfless, and his steady goodness becomes the standard by which Pip, and the reader, finally learn to judge what a gentleman truly is.

20 Growing up in Great Expectations is not presented as a simple rise from childhood to success, but as a painful moral education. As a bildungsroman, a form that was hugely popular in the nineteenth century, the novel follows Pip from a frightened orphan to a wiser adult, yet Dickens suggests that real maturity comes not from money or social advancement but from humility, gratitude and the ability to love. The novel also explores characters who are prevented from growing up, or who grow up wrongly, which makes Pip's eventual maturity more meaningful.

The very name "Pip", a seed, hints that the novel is about growth, and the opening

Question number

places him in a bleak setting that forces him to grow up early. Alone in the churchyard among his family's graves, Pip describes himself as a "small bundle of shivers", a phrase that captures his vulnerability before Magwitch terrifies him. Being "brought up by hand" by Mrs Joe, he is treated as a burden. In Victorian Britain, many poor children were expected to work from a very young age, and Pip's apprenticeship at the forge reflects the limited future open to a boy of his class. Dickens, who was sent to work in a blacking factory as a child, writes about this world with sympathy.

The turning point in Pip's growing up comes at Satis House. Estella mocks his "coarse hands" and "common boots", and Pip begins to see himself through her contempt. The older narrator reflects that it was "a memorable day to me, for it made great changes in me", and he directly addresses the reader, asking them to think of the "long chain of iron or gold, of thorns or flowers" that might have been different without one such day. This intrusion of the adult voice shows how the form of retrospective first person narration allows Dickens to show two stages of growing up at once: the child who feels the shame, and the man who understands its consequences. Pip's ambition, expressed to Biddy in his wish to be a gentleman, is born from humiliation rather than genuine aspiration.

Ironically, Pip's "great expectations" make him less mature rather than more. In London he becomes snobbish and extravagant, joins the Finches of the Grove, and runs up debts. Most painfully, he is ashamed of Joe when he visits. Dickens structures the novel so that Pip's outward rise matches an inward decline, implying that a gentleman's education in manners is no substitute for moral growth. The retrospective narrator later condemns his own self-deception, calling himself one of the "self-swindlers", a harsh compound noun that shows how far the older Pip has come in honest self-judgement.

Question number

The true moment of growing up arrives when Magwitch returns and reveals that he, not Miss Havisham, is Pip's benefactor. At first Pip feels only disgust, but over the final chapters he learns to see Magwitch's love. Magwitch calls himself Pip's "second father", and Pip, who had been so ashamed of his origins, holds the dying convict's hand and tells him of his lost daughter. Dickens, who believed that harsh punishments only bred more crime, uses Magwitch to show that even the despised can be good, and Pip's acceptance of him marks his moral maturity. Pip's illness that follows works almost as a symbolic rebirth: nursed by Joe, he becomes a child again so that he can grow up properly.

Dickens also explores growing up through other characters. Miss Havisham represents a refusal to grow at all, having stopped every clock at the moment she was jilted and still wearing her wedding dress decades later. Her decaying cake and yellowed dress symbolise a life frozen in pain, and her attempt to raise Estella as a weapon against men shows how damaging a corrupt upbringing can be. Estella is taught to have no heart, and only after her cruel marriage to Bentley Drummle does she begin to change. She tells Pip she has been "bent and broken" but hopes "into a better shape". The metaphor suggests that suffering, like the blacksmith's hammer, can reshape a person, which links her growth to the imagery of Joe's forge. In contrast, Herbert grows up steadily through honest work.

By the end, Pip works abroad with Herbert's firm, repays his debts, and returns to find Joe and Biddy married with a son named after him. His wish that Joe and Biddy will have a child to love reveals an altruistic outlook that the young Pip lacked. The final scene with Estella is quietly hopeful, as Pip sees "no shadow of another parting from her", though Dickens leaves some ambiguity. Overall, Dickens presents growing up as a process of losing illusions: Pip only becomes a true adult

Question number

once he gives up his great expectations, suggesting to a Victorian readership obsessed with social progress that the most important kind of growth is moral rather than financial.

21 The character I sympathise with most in The Scarlet Letter is Hester Prynne. Hawthorne presents her as a woman punished with lifelong public shame by a rigid Puritan community, yet he shapes the novel so that the reader's sympathy grows as hers is denied by the people around her. Through Hester, Hawthorne appears to question the harshness of seventeenth century Puritan Boston, while also suggesting that suffering can produce a strength and compassion her judges lack.

Sympathy is created from the opening chapters through setting. The prison door is described as heavy and gloomy, but beside it grows a wild rose bush, which the narrator offers to the reader as a "sweet moral blossom". This symbol immediately suggests that beauty and natural feeling survive even within the cold justice of the colony, and it prepares us to see Hester as the rose beside the prison. When she emerges carrying Pearl, the townswomen outside are presented as coarse and merciless, one even suggesting she should be branded on the forehead or put to death. Hawthorne's narrator contrasts their hardness with Hester's dignity, and the elaborately embroidered "A" on her breast, rather than humbling her, seems almost to defy them. The reader sympathises because her punishment is so public and her accusers so lacking in pity.

The scaffold scene in "The Market-Place" deepens this sympathy. Standing exposed for hours, Hester refuses to name Pearl's father, even when Dimmesdale, the very man who shares her sin, publicly urges her to speak. The dramatic irony is painful: the reader gradually realises that her loyalty protects a man who lacks her courage.

Question number

Hawthorne was writing in the 1850s about the 1640s, and his introductory essay, "The Custom-House", reveals his unease about his Puritan ancestors, one of whom was a judge at the Salem witch trials. He even added a "w" to his surname to separate himself from them. This context suggests that Hester's suffering is partly Hawthorne's means of criticising the self-righteous severity of the society that formed his own family.

Hester's isolation is another source of sympathy. She lives in a small cottage on the edge of the town, between the settlement and the wilderness, which structurally reflects her position on the margins of society. She earns her living by needlework, yet even the poor she helps sometimes insult her. Her love for Pearl is fierce, and when the Governor and ministers threaten to take the child away, she pleads desperately, declaring that Pearl is both her happiness and her torture. Modern readers are likely to sympathise strongly with a mother threatened with losing her child, though it is worth remembering that in the period the novel is set, adultery could carry the death penalty, so some contemporary readers might have seen her punishment as relatively merciful.

Hawthorne does not present Hester as a passive victim, which makes her more admirable. Over seven years she turns her shame into service, nursing the sick and comforting the dying, until many people begin to interpret the letter as meaning "Able". The narrator states that "the scarlet letter had not done its office", a dry, almost ironic phrase that shows the Puritan punishment has failed to break her. Instead, the letter becomes "her passport into regions where other women dared not tread", suggesting that her exclusion has given her freedom of thought. Our sympathy here mixes with respect.

In the forest scene, sympathy reaches its height. Hester removes the letter and

Question number

lets down her hair, and sunlight suddenly floods the forest, as if nature itself approves. Her claim that "what we did had a consecration of its own" is a bold rejection of Puritan law, and her plan to escape with Dimmesdale offers hope. Yet Hawthorne structures the novel so that this hope is crushed: Pearl refuses to come to her until the letter is replaced, and Dimmesdale dies on the scaffold soon after his confession. The reader feels for Hester most deeply at this moment, as she supports the dying minister on the scaffold having lost the future she imagined.

Finally, the conclusion invites a more complex sympathy. Hester returns to Boston years later and resumes wearing the letter by choice. She becomes a counsellor to troubled women, and she is buried near Dimmesdale under a single tombstone bearing the letter "A". By making her return voluntary, Hawthorne suggests that she has found a hard-won peace. Overall, Hester elicits sympathy because she endures a lifetime of shame with courage, loyalty and compassion, and Hawthorne uses her to expose the cruelty of a community that judged her far more harshly than it judged itself.

22 Guilt is the dominant theme of The Scarlet Letter, and Hawthorne explores it by contrasting two kinds: guilt that is publicly displayed and guilt that is secretly concealed. Hester's sin is exposed by the scarlet letter, while Dimmesdale's is hidden behind his reputation as a holy minister, and Hawthorne structures the novel to suggest that hidden guilt is far more destructive. Through these contrasts, he questions the Puritan belief that shame enforced by the community leads to repentance, implying instead that honesty with oneself and others is the only route to peace.

Hester's guilt is made visible from the opening scene. The townswomen gathered

Question number

outside the prison recognise that the letter cannot reach her conscience, remarking that however she covers the mark, "the pang of it will be always in her heart". This suggests that the Puritans understood guilt as something both public and private, yet Hawthorne shows that the public symbol does not produce the effect they intend. The letter is so richly embroidered that it seems almost a work of art, and Hester stands with dignity rather than shame. Hawthorne's choice of symbol is rich in ambiguity: the "A" is meant to mean adulteress, but over the course of the novel its meaning shifts. When Hester visits Governor Bellingham's mansion, the curved breastplate reflects the letter "in exaggerated and gigantic proportions", a striking image showing how society reduces her to her sin, as if guilt has swallowed her identity.

Dimmesdale's guilt, by contrast, is concealed, and Hawthorne presents its effects as physical as well as spiritual. His habit of pressing his hand over his heart becomes a repeated motif, so that even Pearl asks why the minister keeps his hand there. The gesture works as a secret version of Hester's letter. As his guilt grows, he becomes pale and thin, and in "The Interior of a Heart" we learn that he whips himself in private and keeps vigils through the night. Hawthorne uses this chapter to show the cruel irony that his suffering makes his sermons more powerful, so the congregation reveres him more the guiltier he feels. When he tries to confess from the pulpit that he is the worst of sinners, they only admire his humility. In the Puritan colony, where ministers held enormous authority and the community was intolerant of dissent, Dimmesdale's fear of exposure seems understandable, yet Hawthorne implies that hypocrisy deepens guilt rather than relieving it.

Chillingworth acts as the agent that intensifies this guilt. Posing as a physician, he lives with the minister and probes his conscience, observing that a sickness "in

Question number

your spirit" will show itself "in your bodily frame". This link between soul and body reflects the novel's Romantic interest in psychology, while the name "Chillingworth" itself suggests coldness. Interestingly, Chillingworth shows almost no guilt for his own actions, even though he admits to Hester that he wronged her first by marrying her when she was young and he was old and deformed. Dimmesdale later claims that Chillingworth's revenge has been "blacker than my sin", since he has "violated, in cold blood, the sanctity of a human heart". Hawthorne seems to suggest that the worst guilt is not sin born of passion, like Hester and Dimmesdale's, but the cold, deliberate cruelty of revenge.

The structure of the novel is built around three scaffold scenes, which chart the progress of guilt. In the first, Hester stands alone while Dimmesdale watches from above. In the second, the midnight vigil, he stands on the scaffold in darkness, joined by Hester and Pearl, but refuses Pearl's request to stand with them in daylight, while a meteor appears to trace an "A" in the sky. In the final scene, he confesses publicly in daylight and dies in Hester's arms. This careful structure shows guilt moving from concealment towards revelation. Dimmesdale's earlier cry, "Happy are you, Hester, that wear the scarlet letter openly upon your bosom!", is paradoxical, since he envies the punishment she has suffered, but it captures Hawthorne's central point that secret guilt is a heavier burden than open shame.

The novel's context makes this theme especially personal. Hawthorne's ancestor John Hathorne was a judge in the Salem witch trials, and in "The Custom-House" Hawthorne expresses a kind of inherited guilt for his family's harshness. Writing in the nineteenth century about seventeenth century Puritans, he seems to challenge their belief in forcing sinners to display their guilt publicly, showing instead that Hester's redemption comes through her own acts of charity, not through the community's punishment.

Question number

Finally, the moral Hawthorne's narrator draws is direct: "Be true! Be true! Be true!" The triple repetition suggests that the real sin in the novel is not passion but concealment. Overall, Hawthorne presents guilt as a force that can either destroy, as in Dimmesdale and Chillingworth, or, when honestly faced, as in Hester, lead to a painful but genuine redemption.