OCR | A-LEVEL ENGLISH LITERATURE | H472/02

Comparative and contextual study

June 2025 exam series

QUESTION PAPER

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Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Thursday 22 May 2025 – Morning

A Level English Literature

H472/02 Comparative and contextual study

Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes

You must have:
- the OCR 12-page Answer Booklet

Do not use:
- a dictionary

INSTRUCTIONS
- Use black ink.
- Write your answer to each question in the Answer Booklet. The question numbers must be clearly shown.
- Fill in the boxes on the front of the Answer Booklet.
- Answer **two** questions from the topic you have chosen.

INFORMATION
- The total mark for this paper is **60**.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets **[ ]**.
- This document has **16** pages.

ADVICE
- Read each question carefully before you start your answer.

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Answer **two** questions from the topic you have chosen.

Topics	Questions	Pages
American Literature 1880–1940	1 & 2	4–5
The Gothic	3 & 4	6–7
Dystopia	5 & 6	8–9
Women in Literature	7 & 8	10–11
The Immigrant Experience	9 & 10	12–13

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American Literature 1880–1940

Answer **Question 1**.
Then answer Question 2(a) **or** 2(b) **or** 2(c).
You should spend about **1 hour and 15 minutes** on **each** question.

1 Write a critical appreciation of this passage, relating your discussion to your reading of American Literature 1880–1940. **[30]**

Haskins is a struggling farmer who has recently moved to Iowa hoping to improve life for himself and his family. He has rented a neglected farm and an experienced local farmer called Stephen Council has been giving him help and advice.

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[1] *field of the cloth of gold*: a summit meeting in 1520 between Henry VIII of England and Francis I of France notable for a magnificent display of wealth by both kings.

In your answer to Question 2, you must compare at least **two** texts from the list.
At least **one** text **must** be from the two texts at the top of the list in bold.

F Scott Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby* **John Steinbeck: *The Grapes of Wrath***
Henry James: *The Portrait of a Lady* Mark Twain: *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* Theodore Dreiser: *Sister Carrie* Willa Cather: *My Ántonia* Edith Wharton: *The Age of Innocence* William Faulkner: *The Sound and the Fury* Ernest Hemingway: *A Farewell to Arms* Nella Larsen: *Passing* Richard Wright: *Native Son*

Either

2 **(a)** F Scott Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby*

'American literature emphasises the importance of second chances.'

By comparing *The Great Gatsby* with at least one other text prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you agree with this view. **[30]**

Or

(b) John Steinbeck: *The Grapes of Wrath*

'Self-reliance is a key quality for characters in American literature.'

By comparing *The Grapes of Wrath* with at least one other text prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you agree with this view. **[30]**

Or

(c) 'American literature shows us a society which lacks compassion.'

By comparing at least two texts prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you have found this to be the case.

In your answer **you must include** discussion of either *The Great Gatsby* and/or *The Grapes of Wrath*. **[30]**

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The Gothic

Answer **Question 3**.
Then answer Question 4(a) **or** 4(b) **or** 4(c).
You should spend about **1 hour and 15 minutes** on **each** question.

3 Write a critical appreciation of this passage, relating your discussion to your reading of the Gothic. **[30]**

The passage concerns a house which may be haunted and is at the centre of a legal dispute. The narrator, a lawyer, agrees to stay there overnight and the extract is an account of his dream.

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[1] *Colonel Morris*: Colonel Morris has brought the legal case against the narrator's client.
[2] *Playfire … counsel*: Playfire is the name of Colonel Morris's lawyer.

In your answer to Question 4, you must compare at least **two** texts from the list.
At least **one** text **must** be from the two texts at the top of the list in bold.

Bram Stoker: *Dracula* **Angela Carter: *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories******
William Beckford: *Vathek* Ann Radcliffe: *The Italian* Mary Shelley: *Frankenstein* Oscar Wilde: *The Picture of Dorian Gray* William Faulkner: *Light in August* Daphne du Maurier: *Rebecca* Cormac McCarthy: *Outer Dark* Iain Banks: *The Wasp Factory* Toni Morrison: *Beloved*

*Candidates writing about *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* should select material from the whole text.

Either

4 **(a)** Bram Stoker: *Dracula*

'Gothic narratives often feature a sense of impending disaster.'

Consider how far you agree with this statement by comparing *Dracula* with at least one other text prescribed for this topic. **[30]**

Or

(b) Angela Carter: *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories**

'Although Gothic tales depend on fantasy, they can tell us deep truths about human nature.'

By comparing *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories** with at least one other text prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you agree with this view. **[30]**

Or

(c) 'The most important feature of Gothic writing is its entertainment value.'

By comparing at least two texts prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you have found this to be the case.

In your answer **you must include** discussion of either *Dracula* and/or *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories**. **[30]**

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Dystopia

Answer **Question 5**.
Then answer Question 6(a) **or** 6(b) **or** 6(c).
You should spend about **1 hour and 15 minutes** on **each** question.

5 Write a critical appreciation of this passage, relating your discussion to your reading of dystopian literature. **[30]**

This extract is set in a future New York City. George Sanford, the narrator, has a remarkable ability to enter the minds of other people and pick up their thoughts and feelings (he says he can feel their 'vibes' or 'emotions'). He has been hired by the Rescue Squad, a part of the New York police force, and is being given a tour of the Police Psychiatric Department.

© Katherine MacLean, Missing Man, Gateway, 2015. From first line "[The doctor] walked with me over to the reception desk" to last line "It's the only treatment ever used that doesn't bounce them back to a life of crime and more punishment." Item removed due to third party copyright re

[1] *hear-feel*: George has invented this term to describe the way he can sense the feelings of others who are nearby. Unlike the police intern, George knows there is someone behind the door panicking because he can 'hear-feel' their 'vibes'.

In your answer to Question 6, you must compare at least **two** texts from the list.
At least **one** text **must** be from the two texts at the top of the list in bold.

George Orwell: *Nineteen Eighty-Four* **Margaret Atwood: *The Handmaid's Tale***
H G Wells: *The Time Machine* Aldous Huxley: *Brave New World* Ray Bradbury: *Fahrenheit 451* Anthony Burgess: *A Clockwork Orange* J G Ballard: *The Drowned World* Doris Lessing: *Memoirs of a Survivor* P D James: *The Children of Men* Octavia E Butler: *Parable of the Sower* Cormac McCarthy: *The Road*

Either

6 **(a)** George Orwell: *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

'Dystopian writing shows the limitations of human systems of government.'

By comparing *Nineteen Eighty-Four* with at least one other text prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you agree with this view. **[30]**

Or

(b) Margaret Atwood: *The Handmaid's Tale*

'Dystopian regimes contain the seeds of their own downfall.'

By comparing *The Handmaid's Tale* with at least one other text prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you agree with this view. **[30]**

Or

(c) 'Dystopian writing shows that there are limits to the trust between people.'

By comparing at least two texts prescribed for this topic, explore how far you agree with this view.

In your answer **you must include** discussion of either *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and/or *The Handmaid's Tale*. **[30]**

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Women in Literature

Answer **Question 7**.
Then answer Question 8(a) **or** 8(b) **or** 8(c).
You should spend about **1 hour and 15 minutes** on **each** question.

7 Write a critical appreciation of the passage, relating your discussion to your reading concerning Women in Literature. **[30]**

This passage is set in America in 1908. Mrs Bascomb is a schoolteacher. She is a widow with one son, Ralph, who has just graduated from university and has married unexpectedly, only telling his mother after the wedding. His wife, Lottie, is pregnant and the couple have come to live with Mrs Bascomb.

© Dorothy Canfield Fisher, Her Son's Wife, pages 55-56, Little Brown Book Group Limited, 1986. From first line "They went forward then into a phase which made [Mrs Bascomb's] last months at school seem easy and relaxed." to last line "or would have cared if they had known." Ite

[1] *confinement*: here means childbirth, after which women were generally expected to stay at home and rest for a period of time.
[2] *layette*: clothes, bedding and other necessities for a new-born baby.

In your answer to Question 8, you must compare at least **two** texts from the list.
At least **one** text **must** be from the two texts at the top of the list in bold.

Jane Austen: *Sense and Sensibility* **Virginia Woolf: *Mrs Dalloway***
Charlotte Brontë: *Jane Eyre* George Eliot: *The Mill on the Floss* Thomas Hardy: *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* D H Lawrence: *Women in Love* Zora Neale Hurston: *Their Eyes Were Watching God* Sylvia Plath: *The Bell Jar* Toni Morrison: *The Bluest Eye* Jeanette Winterson: *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* Bernardine Evaristo: *Girl, Woman, Other*

Either

8 **(a)** Jane Austen: *Sense and Sensibility*

'Female characters are preoccupied by the search for a secure situation in life.'

By comparing *Sense and Sensibility* with at least one other text prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you have found this to be the case. **[30]**

Or

(b) Virginia Woolf: *Mrs Dalloway*

'Female characters in literature often underestimate themselves.'

By comparing *Mrs Dalloway* with at least one other text prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you agree with this view. **[30]**

Or

(c) 'Female characters are often vulnerable to exploitation or mistreatment.'

By comparing at least two texts prescribed for this topic, explore how far you agree with this claim.

In your answer **you must include** discussion of either *Sense and Sensibility* and/or *Mrs Dalloway*. **[30]**

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The Immigrant Experience

Answer **Question 9**.
Then answer Question 10(a) **or** 10(b) **or** 10(c).
You should spend about **1 hour and 15 minutes** on **each** question.

9 Write a critical appreciation of the passage, relating your discussion to your reading concerning the Immigrant Experience. **[30]**

The narrator of this extract, Rose Hsu Jordan, is the daughter of Chinese immigrants to America. This part of the novel deals with the break-up of her marriage to Ted Jordan, and in the passage she explains how she first met his parents.

© Amy Tan, The Joy Luck Club, pages 118-119, Ivy Books, 1991. From first line "Later, when Ted and his father went off to play volleyball with the others," to last line "And within a year of our first meeting we were living together." Item removed due to third party copyright re

[1] *yin and yang*: a concept originating in Chinese philosophy describing opposite but interconnected forces.

In your answer to Question 10, you must compare at least **two** texts from the list.
At least **one** text **must** be from the two texts at the top of the list in bold.

Henry Roth: *Call it Sleep* **Mohsin Hamid: *The Reluctant Fundamentalist***
Upton Sinclair: *The Jungle* Sam Selvon: *The Lonely Londoners* Philip Roth: *Goodbye, Columbus* Timothy Mo: *Sour Sweet* Jhumpa Lahiri: *The Namesake* Monica Ali: *Brick Lane* Andrea Levy: *Small Island* Kate Grenville: *The Secret River* John Updike: *Terrorist*

Either

10 **(a)** Henry Roth: *Call It Sleep*

'The literature of immigration is frequently characterised by hope.'

By comparing *Call It Sleep* with at least one other text prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you agree with this view. **[30]**

Or

(b) Mohsin Hamid: *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

'The immigrant experience often involves encounters with prejudice.'

By comparing *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* with at least one other text prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you agree with this view. **[30]**

Or

(c) 'Hard work is generally a key feature of the immigrant experience.'

By comparing at least two texts prescribed for this topic, discuss how far you agree with this view.

In your answer **you must include** discussion of either *Call It Sleep* and/or *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. **[30]**

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