

YORK NOTES for GCSE

AQA PRACTICE TESTS

New for GCSE (9–1)



ROMEO AND JULIET

AQA PRACTICE TESTS WITH ANSWERS



YORK NOTES



ROMEO AND JULIET

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CONTENTS

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

How to use these practice tests.....	4
How to use the answer sections.....	5
Assessment Objectives and weightings	6
Mark scheme	7

PART TWO: YORK NOTES PRACTICE TESTS WITH ANNOTATED SAMPLE ANSWERS

Question 1	10
Annotated sample answers	14
Mid Level.....	14
Good Level	16
Very High Level.....	18
Question 2	20
Annotated sample answers	24
Mid Level.....	24
Good Level	26
Very High Level.....	28
Question 3	30
Annotated sample answers	34
Mid Level.....	34
Good Level	36
Very High Level.....	38
Question 4	40
Annotated sample answers	44
Mid Level.....	44
Good Level	46
Very High Level.....	48

PART THREE: FURTHER YORK NOTES PRACTICE TESTS WITH SHORT ANSWERS

Question 5	51
Question 6	52
Question 7	53
Answers	54

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

How to use these practice tests

This book contains seven GCSE English Literature exam-style practice tests for *Romeo and Juliet*. All the York Notes tests have been modelled on the ones that you will sit in your AQA GCSE 9–1 English Literature exam.

There are lots of ways these tests can support your study and revision for your AQA English Literature exam on *Romeo and Juliet*. There is no 'right' way – choose the one (or ones) that suits your learning style best.

You could use the book:

1 Alongside the York Notes Study Guide for *Romeo and Juliet*

Do you have the York Notes Study Guide for *Romeo and Juliet*?

These tests will allow you to try out all the skills and techniques outlined in the Study Guide. So you could:

- choose a question from this book
- read the sections of the Study Guide relevant to the question, i.e. Plot and Action; Characters; Themes, Contexts and Setting; Structure, Form and Language
- use the Progress Booster exam section of the Study Guide to remind yourself of key exam techniques
- complete the question.

2 As a stand-alone revision programme

Do you know the text inside out and have you already mastered the skills needed for your exam?

If so, you can keep your skills fresh by answering one or two questions from this book each day or week in the lead-up to the exam. You could make a revision diary and allocate particular questions to particular times.

3 As a form of mock exam

Would you like to test yourself under exam conditions?

You could put aside part of a day to work on a practice test in a quiet room. Set a stopwatch so that you can experience what it will be like in your real exam. If some of your friends have copies of this book then several of you could all do this together and discuss your answers afterwards.

Or, you could try working through Part Two of this book slowly, question by question, over a number of days as part of your revision, and save the further questions in Part Three to use as a mock test nearer the exam.

How to use the answer sections

This book contains a mixture of annotated sample answers and short (indicative content) answers that will help you to:

- identify the difference between Mid, Good and Very High Level work
- understand how the Assessment Objectives are applied
- grade your own answers by comparing them with the samples provided.

The answers can also give you additional ideas for your responses and help you to aim high.

Points for improvement are given to show the difference between Mid, Good and Very High Level work.

QUESTION 1, MID LEVEL ANSWER

AO1
Well-chosen quotation

AO1
Useful reference to elsewhere in the play, which could be supported with a quotation

Earlier in this play, Benvolio is also portrayed as a man with good intentions when he tries to stop other characters from fighting. In the first street fight of the play, he tells the men who are fighting 'Put up your swords.' This helps the audience to see Benvolio as a peacemaker. In this scene, Shakespeare makes him seem very different to the servants and Tybalt who seem to enjoy fighting. This also shows that he has good intentions.

Benvolio is shown as a peacemaker again when he tries to stop Mercutio from fighting with Tybalt later in the play. He warns Mercutio that it is very hot outside and that if the Capulets arrive there will be trouble. The hot weather means people lose their tempers quickly and Benvolio wants to get his friend away from there. But Benvolio doesn't manage to stop this fight and Mercutio dies even though Benvolio had the good intention to save him.

In this extract, the audience can see that Benvolio is trying to help a friend. Eventually, Romeo does go to the ball where he meets Juliet and falls in love, just like Benvolio said he would. Also in other parts of the play Benvolio tries to stop people fighting which is another thing that shows him to be a man with good intentions.

AO1
Some focus on how Shakespeare constructs Benvolio as a character

AO3
Relevant reference to context

AO1
Clear focus on the question but phrasing could be more sophisticated

MID LEVEL

Comment:
This response shows a clear understanding of Benvolio's main character traits and the answer is supported with relevant examples from the text. There is a focus on the question throughout the answer although the repeated use of the words 'good intentions' and 'shows that' could have been avoided. The candidate makes reference to the effects of language and there are some basic contextual comments. Links are made between the passage and the whole text.

For a Good Level:

- Aim to vary the vocabulary used.
- Comment on form and structure as well as language.
- Make more specific references to subject terminology.
- Zoom in on words within your chosen quotations.

Sample answers show the key points and ideas you could have included, with examiner-style annotations linked to the Assessment Objectives.

Each annotated sample is awarded a level with an examiner-style comment.

Assessment Objectives and weightings

Your work on *Romeo and Juliet* will be examined through the four Assessment Objectives (AOs) listed below:

AO1	Read, understand and respond to texts. You should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response ● use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.
AO2	Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.
AO3	Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.
AO4	Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures, for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.

The marks allocated by AQA for each Assessment Objective are as follows:

AO1	12 marks
AO2	12 marks
AO3	6 marks
Total (per question)	30 marks*

* Plus an additional 4 marks for AO4.

Knowing the number of marks allowed for each AO is important, as this will help you to achieve the right balance of key skills and techniques in your answer.



Mark scheme

The annotated sample answers that follow Questions 1 to 4 in this book have been given a Level based on the mark schemes below.*

Lower Level

AO1	You give some relevant responses to the set task and use some suitable references.
AO2	You identify some of the writer's methods but do not always comment effectively on them.
AO3	You show some awareness of contextual factors but find it difficult to link them to the text.
AO4	Your use of spelling, grammar and punctuation is rather inconsistent but does not usually impede meaning. Sentences and vocabulary are straightforward, with little variation.

Mid Level

AO1	You give a clear response and select suitable references and quotations.
AO2	You make clear references to the writer's methods to support your points.
AO3	You make clear links between some aspects of context and the text.
AO4	You spell and punctuate with general accuracy and use a range of vocabulary and sentences.

Turn to page 8 for the mark schemes for Good to High and Very High Levels.

* These are 'student-friendly' mark schemes and are a guide only.

Good to High Level

AO1	You demonstrate very effective understanding of the task and text, and choose references and quotations carefully.
AO2	You analyse carefully and comment consistently well on the writer's methods, interpreting ideas.
AO3	You make very effective links between context and the text.
AO4	Your spelling, punctuation and grammar is very consistent and shows generally excellent control of meaning.

Very High Level

AO1	You have a broad, conceptualised idea of the text, and make well-judged and wide-ranging use of references and quotations.
AO2	You are analytical and explore the text precisely and convincingly. You comment in finely tuned detail on the writer's use of language, form and structure.
AO3	You write convincingly and relevantly about a wide range of contextual factors.
AO4	Your use of spelling, punctuation and grammar is very accurate and shows excellent control of meaning.

Now you know what you're aiming for, you can begin the practice tests.

Turn to page 10 for Question 1.

PART TWO: YORK NOTES PRACTICE TESTS WITH ANNOTATED SAMPLE ANSWERS

Question 1

Read the following extract from *Romeo and Juliet* (Act I, Scene 2) and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Benvolio is trying to persuade Romeo to attend the Capulet party.

BENVOLIO

At this same ancient feast of Capulet's
Supps the fair Rosaline whom thou so loves,
With all the admirèd beauties of Verona.
Go thither, and with unattainted eye

- 5 Compare her face with some that I shall show,
And I will make thee think thy swan a crow.

ROMEO

When the devout religion of mine eye
Maintains such falsehood, then turn tears to fires;
And these, who, often drowned, could never die,

- 10 Transparent heretics, be burnt for liars!
One fairer than my love? The all-seeing sun
Ne'er saw her match since first the world begun.

BENVOLIO

Tut, you saw her fair, none else being by,
Herself poised with herself in either eye.

- 15 But in that crystal scales let there be weighed
Your lady's love against some other maid
That I will show you shining at this feast,
And she shall scant show well that now seems best.

ROMEO

I'll go along, no such sight to be shown,

- 20 But to rejoice in splendour of mine own.

Write about:

- [30 marks]**
AO4 [4 marks]

[illegible]

Annotated sample answers

Now, read the three sample answers that follow and, based on what you have read, try to allocate a level to your own work. Which of the three responses is your answer closest to? Don't be discouraged if your work doesn't seem as strong as some of the responses here – the point is to use these samples to learn about what is needed and then put it into practice in your own work. On the other hand, you may have mentioned relevant ideas or points that don't appear in these responses; if this is the case, give yourself a pat on the back – it shows you are considering lots of good ideas.

Sample answer A

A01

Clear focus on question

Benvolio is presented as a character with good intentions because he is a caring friend to Romeo and because he always wants to stop people from fighting. In this extract, he is trying to cheer up Romeo, who is feeling sad about Rosaline, so Benvolio tries to persuade Romeo to go to the Capulet party to meet other girls.

The main thing that shows Benvolio's good intentions here is when he is telling Romeo to compare Rosaline to other girls. Benvolio says, 'Compare herself with some that I shall show'. This shows that Benvolio wants Romeo to meet a new woman to admire, to stop him worrying about Rosaline. I think this shows that Benvolio has good intentions because he is being caring, which reminds us of earlier in the play when he helped Romeo's parents to find out why their son was feeling sad.

Also in this extract, Benvolio tells Romeo that Rosaline will seem like a 'crow' compared to a new woman who will be like a 'swan'. He means that Rosaline may not be as pretty as some of the other girls at the party. This bird image works well because a swan is more attractive than a crow. When Benvolio tells Romeo this, he wants his friend to forget Rosaline as he knows she is upsetting him. This image shows the audience that Benvolio is clever enough to choose the right words to persuade Romeo to agree with his plan.

Benvolio carries on trying to help even when Romeo doesn't want to change his mind. This shows that Benvolio won't give up on his friend. He argues against Romeo to make his points stronger. This is shown in 'Tut, you saw her fair, none else being by'. Here, Benvolio is saying that Romeo only thinks Rosaline is best because he hasn't ever considered any others. In Shakespeare's time men would go to feasts like this to meet new women, so Benvolio's plan could work. In the end he does persuade Romeo to go to the feast which shows that Romeo respects him.

A01

Links point to the wider text

A02

Understands effect on audience

A03

Relevant reference to context

A01

This quotation could be more fluently embedded

A02

Explains effect but the analogy could be further developed

A01

Wording is becoming a bit repetitive now

A04

The candidate has forgotten to use quotation marks

A01

Well-chosen quotation

A01

Useful reference to elsewhere in the play, which could be supported with a quotation

Earlier in this play, Benvolio is also portrayed as a man with good intentions when he tries to stop other characters from fighting. In the first street fight of the play, he tells the men who are fighting 'Put up your swords.' This helps the audience to see Benvolio as a peacemaker. In this scene, Shakespeare makes him seem very different to the servants and Tybalt who seem to enjoy fighting. This also shows that he has good intentions.

Benvolio is shown as a peacemaker again when he tries to stop Mercutio from fighting with Tybalt later in the play. He warns Mercutio that it is very hot outside and that if the Capulets arrive there will be trouble. The hot weather means people lose their tempers quickly and Benvolio wants to get his friend away from there. But Benvolio doesn't manage to stop this fight and Mercutio dies even though Benvolio had the good intention to save him.

In this extract, the audience can see that Benvolio is trying to help a friend. Eventually, Romeo does go to the ball where he meets Juliet and falls in love, just like Benvolio said he would. Also in other parts of the play Benvolio tries to stop people fighting which is another thing that shows him to be a man with good intentions.

Some focus on how Shakespeare constructs Benvolio as a character

A01

Relevant reference to context

A03

Clear focus on the question but phrasing could be more sophisticated

A01

MID LEVEL

Comment:

This response shows a clear understanding of Benvolio's main character traits and the answer is supported with relevant examples from the text. There is a focus on the question throughout the answer although the repeated use of the words 'good intentions' and 'shows that' could have been avoided. The candidate makes reference to the effects of language and there are some basic contextual comments. Links are made between the passage and the whole text.

For a Good Level:

- Aim to vary the vocabulary used.
- Comment on form and structure as well as language.
- Make more specific references to subject terminology.
- Zoom in on words within your chosen quotations.

Sample answer B

A01

Shows knowledge of the whole text by placing the extract in context

A01

Relevant link to elsewhere in the play

A03

Valid link to social context

A01

Focus on Benvolio as a constructed character by using the author's name

A02

Technique named but could mention that he later calls Juliet the sun

A02

Close focus on language although this could be further developed by mentioning that crows feed off carrion

Shakespeare uses various techniques to present Benvolio as a character with good intentions.

This extract comes early in the play and sets up Romeo's first meeting with Juliet. Benvolio wants to stop Romeo from feeling upset about Rosaline by persuading him to meet more women at the ball. In other parts of the play we also see his good intentions when Benvolio acts as a peacemaker.

In the opening scene of the play, Shakespeare shows the audience how Benvolio wants to stop people fighting when he tells Tybalt, 'I do but keep the peace'. Tybalt responds by insisting that he hates peace. Shakespeare therefore uses this conversation to contrast Benvolio and Tybalt. Since Benvolio sees peace as something to aspire to but Tybalt detests it, Shakespeare indicates that Benvolio is well-intentioned.

In this extract, Shakespeare presents Benvolio as a caring friend who wants to solve Romeo's problems by providing a practical plan. He suggests that Romeo should go to the ball, forget about Rosaline and 'Compare her face to some that I shall show'.

The ball would have been a suitable place for Romeo to meet new women because in Shakespeare's time such events were often used for that purpose. Benvolio's idea therefore seems like a good way to help his friend.

Earlier in the play, Benvolio is also presented as caring when he helps Lord and Lady Montague to find out why Romeo seems sad. In Act I Scene 1, he listens carefully to Romeo and found out why he is upset. Shakespeare shows him asking sensitive questions such as 'what sadness lengthens Romeo's hours?' This approach shows the audience that Benvolio is a sympathetic listener.

Shakespeare also shows the audience that Benvolio is prepared to argue with Romeo to convince him that his plan is worth trying. When Romeo describes Rosaline using the metaphor of the 'all-seeing sun', Benvolio suggests that there will be other women 'shining' at the feast. Here Shakespeare makes both men use light imagery, showing that Benvolio is deliberately relating his argument to Romeo's.

Benvolio's argument is further supported when he suggests that Rosaline will appear like a 'crow' in comparison to a 'swan' when she is compared to other women. A swan is elegant, gliding and beautiful while a crow is ugly and ungainly. The point here is similar to 'She shall scant show well that now seems best' which sums up Benvolio's whole message. Here

A01

Relates answer to the whole text

A02

Focus on the writer's intentions

A01

Clear focus on the extract

A04

This should be in the present tense (finds)

A02

Examines effect of writer's methods on the audience

A02

Focus on the effects of language, with perceptive comment

A02

Effect of a named technique

A01

Relevant link to elsewhere in the play, showing planning

A01

Competent conclusion

Shakespeare uses alliteration in the initial 's' sounds to emphasise Benvolio's point of persuasion. This shows that Benvolio sticks to his guns and does not give up his good intentions easily. In the end, Benvolio is proved right when Romeo meets Juliet.

Benvolio is also proved right when he suggests that Mercutio should leave the streets because 'The day is hot, the Capels are abroad'. Benvolio rightly predicts that there may be a fight. Shakespeare deliberately set this play in Verona so that he could use the hot climate to provoke the tempers of his characters. Benvolio is clever enough to connect the heat with danger. Unfortunately, Mercutio doesn't take any notice of him, which leads to his death later in the play. However, Benvolio's peaceful intentions here remind the audience of how he tried to stop the very first street fight in the play.

Shakespeare's presentation of Benvolio as a well-meaning character is obvious when he acts as a peacemaker, but this extract shows that he is also presented as a good friend who is prepared to disagree with Romeo and even to be brutally honest if necessary, as indicated by 'Tut, you saw her fair, none else being by', which suggests that he believes that Romeo's perspective is too narrow. Benvolio wants to solve Romeo's problems by offering him new options. Shakespeare shows us that Benvolio is strong enough to resist counter-arguments when he feels that his ideas are for the best. His willingness to help Lord and Lady Montague also indicates his sympathetic nature. Therefore each time he appears in the play, Shakespeare portrays Benvolio as a man with positive intentions.

A01

This phrase is too colloquial

A03

Valid link to context

GOOD LEVEL

Comment:

This answer shows a good knowledge of the play and maintains a focus on the question. The response links together ideas from different scenes in the text, suggesting that the answer was planned. However, expression could be improved in some instances. Quotations are embedded in the answer and there is some analysis of Shakespeare's language and use of terminology. The candidate also makes relevant references to the play's context.

For a High Level:

- Offer more detailed analytical comments on language.
- Consider the play's form and structure.
- Improve expression by avoiding colloquial phrases such as 'stick to his guns'.
- Suggest a more developed/refined understanding of Benvolio's personality.

Sample answer C

A01

Strong opening which hints at a conceptual approach

The name Benvolio means 'I wish (or mean) well' and, in 'Romeo and Juliet', Shakespeare portrays Benvolio as a well-meaning man who seeks to resolve both physical and psychological conflict. His good intentions are demonstrated by his sympathetic friendship and his determination to anticipate and resolve problems. Unfortunately, in spite of this, Benvolio is unable to prevent the deaths of his two closest friends, and it could even be argued that his well-meaning ideas contribute to the play's tragic ending.

In this extract, Shakespeare portrays Benvolio as a compassionate friend who offers a practical solution to Romeo's emotional distress by encouraging him to attend the Capulet feast and compare Rosaline to other women. In Shakespeare's time, it would have been common for men to meet suitable marriage partners at such a feast. In this respect, Benvolio's plan seems sensible and well-intentioned.

Benvolio acts as a confidant for Romeo, just as the Nurse acts as a confidant for Juliet. The use of such confidants is common in Shakespeare's plays because it allows his audience to hear more of the main character's thoughts as they reveal them to the confidant. Benvolio's strong listening skills are apparent in this extract since he speaks for six lines, then allows Romeo to do the same before responding with six lines again. This indicates that Benvolio neither seeks to dominate the conversation nor to be dominated. Shakespeare uses this structural device to indicate Benvolio's capacity to consider Romeo's viewpoint as well as his own.

The close relationship between Benvolio and Romeo is also apparent when both men select words from the lexical field of vision, such as 'eye', 'sight' and 'seeing', suggesting that they are in rapport. Benvolio compares Romeo's eyes to 'crystal scales' where differing perceptions can be weighed against each other, an image which might also reflect his own well-balanced character. When Benvolio tells Romeo to look with 'unattainted eye', he implies that it is sensible to contemplate various options rather than being biased or jumping to conclusions. This might also suggest that Benvolio is aware of Romeo's tendency to act impetuously and that he seeks to counter this. Indeed, his observation that Romeo fell for Rosaline 'none else being by' implies he can be brutally honest in his advice: this may explain why Benvolio is ultimately excluded from Romeo's confidence. Perhaps Romeo fears he will tell him things he does not wish to hear.

Shakespeare selects strong visual imagery to demonstrate Benvolio's persuasive skills when Benvolio suggests that Romeo might eventually view Rosaline as

A01

Personal, critical comment

A03

Links social context to the task

A03

Link to literary conventions

A02

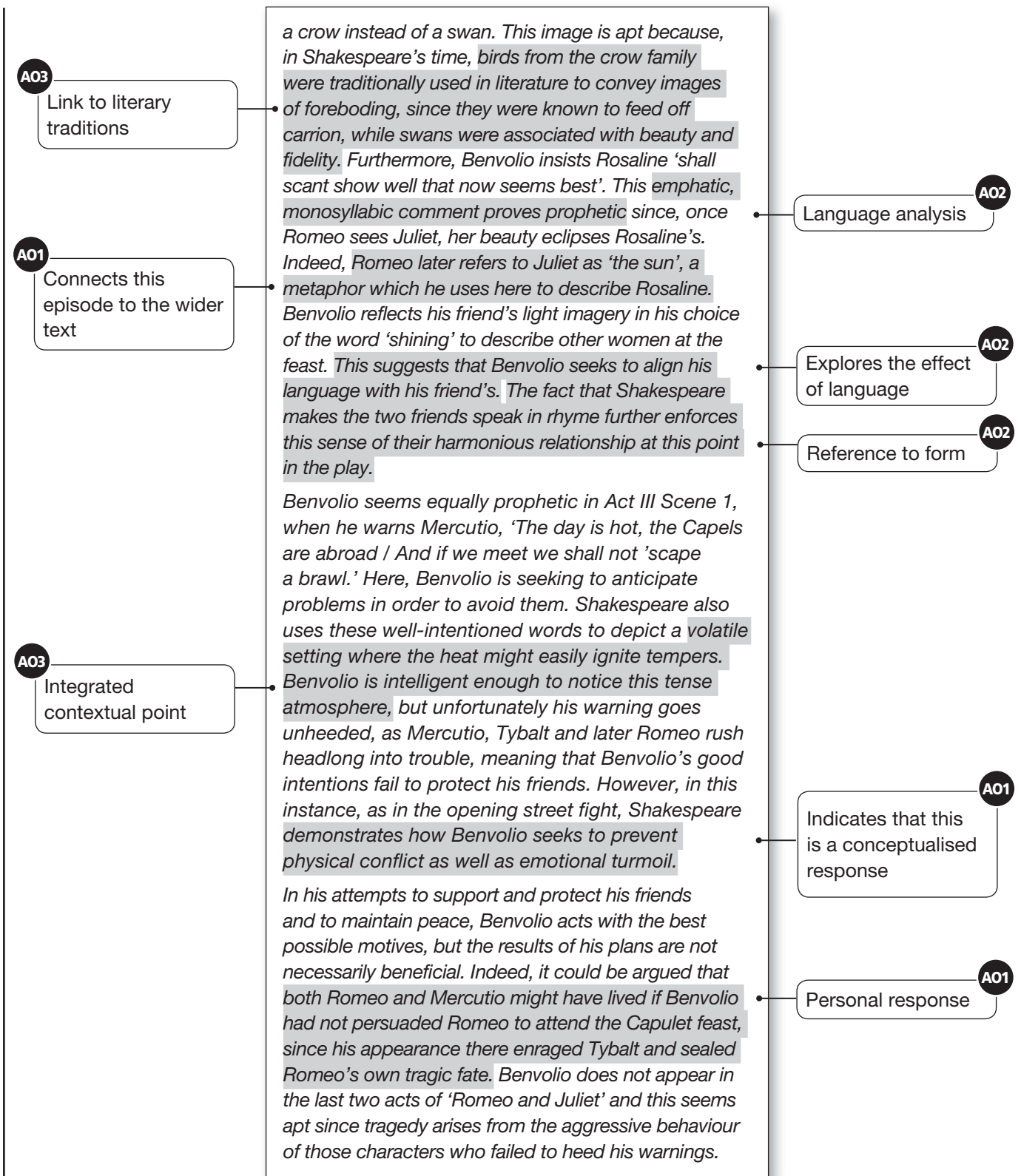
Insightful analysis of structure

A02

Refers to specific subject terminology and its effect

A04

Range of sentences – long and short – used for effect



VERY HIGH LEVEL

Comment:

This is a critical, conceptualised answer which explores a range of high-level ideas by combining a convincing focus on the question with detailed analysis of Shakespeare's use of language and structure. The candidate makes relevant references to literary traditions and the play's social context in order to support a sustained argument. This response is fluently expressed and coherently structured.

Question 2

Read the following extract from *Romeo and Juliet* (Act V Scene 3) and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, Romeo is grieving over Juliet's body because he believes that she is dead.

ROMEO

Ah, dear Juliet,
Why art thou yet so fair? Shall I believe
That unsubstantial death is amorous,
And that the lean abhorred monster keeps
5 Thee here in dark to be his paramour?
For fear of that I still will stay with thee
And never from this palace of dim night
Depart again. Here, here will I remain
With worms that are thy chambermaids. O here
10 Will I set up my everlasting rest
And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
From this world-wearied flesh. Eyes, look your last!
Arms, take your last embrace! and, lips, O you
The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss
15 A dateless bargain to engrossing death!
Come, bitter conduct, come, unsavoury guide!
Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on
The dashing rocks thy seasick weary bark!
Here's to my love! [*He drinks*] O true Apothecary!
20 Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die. [*He falls*]

Starting with this speech, explore how Shakespeare presents ideas about death.

Write about:

- how Shakespeare uses Romeo to present ideas about death in this speech
- how Shakespeare presents ideas about death in the play as a whole.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

Annotated sample answers

Now, read the three sample answers that follow and, based on what you have read, try to allocate a level to your own work. Which of the three responses is your answer closest to? Don't be discouraged if your work doesn't seem as strong as some of the responses here – the point is to use these samples to learn about what is needed and then put it into practice in your own work. Conversely, you may have mentioned relevant ideas or points that don't appear in these responses; if this is the case, give yourself a pat on the back – it shows you are considering lots of good ideas.

Sample answer A

AO2 Use of literary terminology

AO1 Shows knowledge of the whole play but the comment is quite vague

AO3 Relevant reference to context which could be developed

AO4 The candidate has forgotten to close the quotation marks here

Death is one of the main themes in 'Romeo and Juliet' because so many of the main characters die. In this extract, Shakespeare uses Romeo to present ideas about death because he sets this scene in a tomb with Romeo looking at Juliet's body. It is Romeo's death that makes Juliet want to kill herself so this is a very important extract.

One technique that Shakespeare uses to present ideas about death is personification. In this speech, Romeo says, 'death is amorous' which is an example of personification. The word 'amorous' in this quotation means that death seems like Juliet's lover. Shakespeare uses this idea to show us that Romeo feels upset that death has taken Juliet away from him.

Another idea about death in this play is how people get very upset when their friends and relatives die, just like Romeo is upset about Juliet here. One example of this is when Romeo feels upset when Mercutio dies, so he fights Tybalt and kills him. Another example of this is Lady Capulet who gets upset when she sees Tybalt has been killed and asks the Prince to execute Romeo as punishment.

Shakespeare also gives us the idea that Romeo wants to die. Romeo decides to kill himself when he sees Juliet in the tomb, as he does not want to live without her. He may want to die because he does not think that death is the end because when this play was written most people believed in life after death. Romeo thinks that his death will be an 'everlasting rest'. The idea here is that death is peaceful like sleep which makes it seem nice and not something to fear. When Juliet wakes up and finds Romeo dead, she wants to kill herself too.

Romeo wants to die because he thinks that he won't be separated from Juliet if he kills himself. When he says 'here, here will I remain,' he repeats the word 'here' to show us that he thinks he will stay in the

AO1 Focus on the question and relevant brief reference to other scenes in the play

AO2 Some focus on language here, zooming in on a word and referring to its effect, although the interpretation could be more precise

AO1 This is storytelling rather than analysis

AO1 Not actually true – Romeo decides to kill himself when he is told that Juliet is dead

AO2 Zooms in on key words with comment on what is suggested

A01

This is a rather broad statement

A01

Useful summing up with key words from the question

tomb with Juliet. Repeating the word 'here' makes it seem like he will linger in this place. Later on Juliet has the same idea when she kills herself to be with Romeo.

Shakespeare makes some of his characters die in horrible ways but they don't have much fear of death. At the end of this speech, Romeo takes poison. As he dies, he says, 'thy drugs are quick', meaning that he is glad that the poison is ending his life so quickly. He wants to die so he isn't worried if the poison is painful. Dying by the sword would also be painful and several of the characters die that way. For example, Mercutio and Tybalt die by swords in Act III after they fight. Like Romeo they don't seem to be at all afraid of dying.

Shakespeare presents lots of ideas about death because it is a key theme in 'Romeo and Juliet'. Several of the main characters die, making their loved ones feel upset. He also shows us that quite a few of these people actually cause their own deaths and they don't even seem to feel frightened about this. However, at the end of the play, when Romeo and Juliet lie dead in the tomb, their families are so upset that they finally make peace. Shakespeare uses this ending to show us that although death makes people feel sad, it can create a good outcome such as peace.

A02

Explains the effect of a named technique

A01

Link to wider text which could be developed

A01

Makes a clear and sensible inference

MID LEVEL

Comment:

A clear answer which shows knowledge of the text and some good understanding of the ways in which Shakespeare presents ideas about death. Comments on language include relevant terminology but could be more detailed and specific. However, the response also contains straightforward telling of the story at times, which should be avoided. There is a brief comment on context but more is needed.

For a Good Level:

- Consider context more fully.
- Develop points to go into more analytical depth.
- Explore the significance of events rather than telling the story.
- Comment more frequently on Shakespeare's use of language, structure and form.

Sample answer B

Death is an important theme in 'Romeo and Juliet' as so many of the main characters die. In this scene, Shakespeare shows Romeo in the tomb grieving over Juliet's body. She is not really dead, but Romeo thinks she is, so he decides to poison himself in order to join her. In this speech, as in other scenes of the play, Shakespeare suggests that death has both good and bad aspects.

Just before our extract, Romeo fights and kills Paris and then sees Tybalt's body in a 'bloody sheet'. Shakespeare uses this reference to Tybalt's corpse to remind the audience of the violent deaths that occurred in the dramatic street fight in Act III. These deaths of Tybalt and Mercutio in Act III changed the course of the action because they made the Prince banish Romeo which he felt was worse than death. The deaths in Act III also give the play a dramatic central climax and Romeo's death in this scene is clearly another dramatic moment for the audience to watch.

In this speech Shakespeare portrays negative ideas about death through personification. Romeo calls death an 'abhorred monster' which shows the audience that he views death as an evil creature who has stolen his wife. Shakespeare uses the same technique in Act IV Scene 5, when Paris thinks that Juliet has died and refers to 'detestable Death'. Both 'abhorred' and 'detestable' are negative terms which suggest that the personified death is hated.

A false but positive idea about death is seen when Romeo claims that death has 'had no power' over Juliet's beauty yet. Romeo seems to be delighted that Juliet is 'yet so fair' after dying. Ironically, the audience knows that Juliet looks beautiful because she is faking her death and will wake shortly. However, Romeo remains unaware of this and admires her beauty.

The idea that the young lovers could be reunited by death also seems positive. Romeo hopes that, in death, he will be able to stay with Juliet forever. As a Christian, he would have believed in life after death. As he prepares to die, Romeo hopes to find an 'everlasting rest' in death. Here Shakespeare uses the word 'rest' to portray death as something peaceful and desirable. This phrase also implies that death might end Romeo's suffering.

A negative idea about death is that many of the deaths in the play are violent or unnatural such as Romeo's premeditated death in this scene by taking poison. When Romeo hears that Juliet is

Competent opening thesis, which suggests planning

Aware of writer's intentions

Aware of context – the play as a theatrical production

Relevant reference to elsewhere

Effective use of embedded quotations

Perceptive comment

Analysis of language

Good attempt at sophisticated vocabulary but the spelling is wrong; it should be 'premeditated'

Comment on the play's structure

A literary technique is identified with a relevant quotation but could zoom in on the words more

Focus on the language used, together with apt quotations

Relevant reference to the play's context but it could be more integrated

AO1

Shows knowledge of the whole text but this is a brief comment. It could be developed to refer to the language of life and death associated with the Friar's herbs

dead, he goes to buy poison in order to kill himself. Shakespeare uses the character of the Apothecary to represent his death theme because he is willing to sell fatal drugs in order to survive. The Apothecary's drugs also remind us of the Friar's drugs which he referred to in Act II. These drugs have caused Juliet's fake death.

Shakespeare cleverly conveys Romeo's painful death by poison through the use of short, sharp sentences such as 'O true Apothecary!' to represent his last breaths. Just like these sentences, the 'drugs are quick' and they soon kill him. It is interesting to note that death by poison was a common feature of plays of this period.

In this scene, we get the idea that Romeo is not afraid to die because he thinks death will reunite him with Juliet. This suggests that he sees dying as a good thing. Then, when Juliet wakes, she thinks the same way. However, when Capulet and Montague see their children dead, they grieve, which leads to the end of their conflict. So Shakespeare uses Romeo and Juliet's deaths in Act V to 'bury their parents' strife' just as the Prologue predicted, which means that, although the ending is tragic, their deaths could be perceived as positive.

AO1

This is only a passing reference which could be explained further

AO2

Examines the effect of sentence structures

AO3

Relevant link to literary traditions although it could be more integrated into the argument

AO1

Use of embedded quotation to support thoughtful point

AO1

This point relates back to the introduction, indicating planning

GOOD LEVEL

Comment:

This is a competent, well-structured answer which draws in ideas from the whole text. The references and quotations are aptly chosen and at times lead to insightful comments, although some points might be developed further. There are relevant links to the play's social context and to the literary tradition of death by poison which could be more thoroughly integrated into the argument.

For a High Level:

- Try to bring points about context more thoroughly into the argument.
- Include more analysis of structure and form.
- Sustain and develop ideas to create a convincing interpretation.

Sample answer C

Shakespeare makes constant references to death in 'Romeo and Juliet'. This speech marks the last moments of Romeo's life before he kills himself, which in turn provokes Juliet's suicide, fulfilling the fatal predictions of the Prologue. It could be argued that Shakespeare presents the deaths of Romeo and Juliet as inevitable since he starts this play by referring to them as 'death marked'.

Shakespeare's audience would have expected to see deaths in this play since it was advertised as 'The most lamentable tragedy of Romeo and Juliet'. Tragedy was a classical form of drama which traditionally dealt with the downfall and death of a high status character as a result of his or her tragic flaw. In 'Romeo and Juliet', Shakespeare adapts this tragic form to suggest that the deaths of Romeo and Juliet serve to punish their parents and to end the 'ancient grudge' that has lasted for generations.

Many Elizabethan families, including Shakespeare's, lost loved ones to infectious diseases. Early in the play, the Nurse reveals that her daughter, Susan, 'is with God' which reminds us that infant mortality was common at that time and that people took comfort from religion. Due to such losses, the concept of a personified death was very common in literature from the 14th century onwards because it allowed writers to portray those who died as innocent victims and death as a cruel murderer. In 'Romeo and Juliet', Shakespeare personifies death in this way to give it menacing connotations.

During his speech, Romeo refers to the personified death as an 'abhorred monster'. The negative connotations of this adjective-noun combination suggest that Romeo views death as evil and repellent although he is relieved that death has not yet 'conquered' Juliet's beauty. Ironically, her appearance remains untouched because her death is merely an illusion. Shakespeare also personifies death in Act IV Scene 5, when Juliet's family react to her drug-induced 'death'. Here, Capulet and Paris curse 'cruel death' and 'detestable death'.

The sinister setting of the tomb, which is described as a 'palace of dim night' to connote darkness, adds to the drama in this extract. Although there would not be much scenery on a Shakespearean stage, his audience might imagine Romeo surrounded by corpses some of which are newly dead. Just before this scene, Romeo impulsively kills Paris who is visiting the tomb and then places his body near Juliet's. Shakespeare uses Paris's death and the sight of Tybalt's body lying in a 'bloody sheet' to

Personal response

AO1

Links context to the text

AO3

Analysis of language

AO2

Explores the wider text

AO1

Refers to the writer's intentions

AO2

AO2
Discusses the tragic form

AO3
Discusses literary traditions

AO1
Perceptive comment

AO4
Uses a range of sentence structures

remind the audience that death can be quick and violent.

When Tybalt dies in Act III Scene 1, Shakespeare utilises the lexical field of death when he refers to a 'mortal hurt' and 'fatal brawl' and even Mercutio's pun 'you shall find me a grave man' immediately tells us he is dying. Shakespeare also uses these deaths as a plot device to change the course of the action, since Romeo is separated from Juliet through banishment. Romeo reacts to this enforced separation by asking the Friar for 'poison mixed' or a 'sharp-ground knife' to kill himself. This incident, which foreshadows Romeo's suicide, resembles Juliet's death threats when she is threatened with an arranged marriage, suggesting that the young lovers might view death as a solution to life's problems.

It is this belief, and the hope that he might be reunited with Juliet, that leads to Romeo's suicide in this scene. Shakespeare structures his speech so that the tension builds up towards the moment of death. Early in this extract, Romeo speaks in extended sentences using enjambment to reflect the outpouring of his grief, as demonstrated by the sentence beginning 'Shall I believe...', which spans four lines. However, later on, as Romeo ingests the poison, Shakespeare creates shorter sentences leading towards the final words, 'Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die.' These short, monosyllabic utterances reflect the idea that the drug is shortening Romeo's breath prior to death.

Ironically, Romeo kills himself in order to 'shake the yoke of inauspicious stars'. However, as he drinks the poison, the audience are aware that, by killing himself, he is actually fulfilling the Prologue's prophecy and inciting Juliet's suicide. As the Prologue predicts, Romeo and Juliet's deaths finally serve to end their parents' strife. From the start of this play, Shakespeare implies that these deaths were inevitable because the young lovers were 'star-crossed' victims of their parents' conflict.

AO2 Comment on the play's structure

AO2 Discusses the writer's technique

AO1 Uses embedded quotations to support ideas

AO2 Comment on structure

AO2 Analyses the writer's technique

AO1 Neatly refers back to the introductory paragraph with a perceptive final comment

VERY HIGH LEVEL

Comment:

This is a convincing answer which shows an impressive understanding of how Shakespeare presents ideas about death in the play. Quotations are embedded, well selected and analysed effectively. The candidate also discusses how death relates to the structure and form of the play. There is a sustained focus on the task and suitable contextual references are integrated throughout the answer.

Question 3

Read the following extract from *Romeo and Juliet* (Act I Scene 1) and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play, the Prince is calming a street fight between the Montagues and the Capulets.

PRINCE

Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,
 Profaners of this neighbour-stainèd steel –
 Will they not hear? – What ho – you men, you beasts,
 That quench the fire of your pernicious rage
 5 With purple fountains issuing from your veins!
 On pain of torture, from those bloody hands
 Throw your mistempered weapons to the ground
 And hear the sentence of your movèd prince.
 Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word
 10 By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,
 Have thrice disturbed the quiet of our streets
 And made Verona's ancient citizens
 Cast by their grave-beseeming ornaments
 To wield old partisans, in hands as old,
 15 Cankered with peace, to part your cankered hate.
 If ever you disturb our streets again,
 Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.

Starting with this speech, how does Shakespeare present the Prince's authority?

Write about:

- how Shakespeare presents ideas about the Prince's authority in this speech
- how Shakespeare presents ideas about the Prince's authority in the play as a whole.

[30 marks]
 AO4 [4 marks]