

Success in Unit 4 (LTA4)

Outline of a talk by Tom Rank at an A Level Revision Day

The assessment objectives differ for Section A – drama – and Section B – poetry. The outline which follows shows the different emphasis. Assessment objectives 1, 2 and 3 apply to both sections of the paper, though the emphasis in AO2 and AO3 will differ slightly because of the different nature of the texts.

The common Assessment Objectives for Sections A and B

AO1 Clear communication

Coherence - the importance of planning
Connectives - signposts
Consider the reader
Clear handwriting!

AO2 Knowledge and understanding

What does *knowing the text* mean?

- The story?
- The characters?
- The ‘themes’?
- The ‘meaning’?
- Learning quotations?

Actually it means all of these – begin, though, by reading the text thoroughly again before you revise the approaches you have studied in class.

AO2 – providing evidence of your knowledge and understanding

Examiners will use this rule of thumb when assessing an answer:

- Band 1 - little evidence, assertion (*this will not be an A Level pass*)
- Band 2 - general reference
- Band 3 - competent knowledge
- Band 4 - detailed knowledge (*this is what you need for an A grade*)

Textual knowledge must, of course, be relevant to the question.

AO3 Form, structure & language

- Important to explore this aspect to reach Band 3 or Band 4
- Show awareness of dramatic aspects (for Section A) or poetic aspects (for Section B)
- Refer to audience, author, effects on stage (for Section A) and/or verse, imagery etc (for Section B – and verse, etc, may also be relevant to Section A)
- Look at language, verse etc.

It's *not* feature-spotting!

LTA4 Section A – Drama

Assessment Objectives for LTA4 Section A

AO4	Independent opinions	45%
AO1	Clear communication	20%
AO2ii	Knowledge & understanding	15%
AO3	Form, structure & language	20%

AO4 Independent opinions

- Be used to debating key issues in your play
- Support your own opinions by close reference to the play
- Learn key short quotations
- Be familiar with common critical terms such as:
 - stereotype
 - melodramatic
 - soliloquy
 - revenge tragedy
- Also be aware of other terms that could be used in discussion of the play you are studying, such as “degenerate”, “gratuitous”, “coherent”, “barbaric” and so on.
- Critical opinions will be supplied in the questions - you do not need to learn a list of opinions
- You must be able to think on your feet - so practise planning
- **The text comes first!**

How to answer Section A

- Write cogently - make each sentence develop your argument
- Always keep the question in mind
- Use frequent brief quotations and/or accurate references to the play
- Interrogate the text - why this word/incident?
- Consider each part of the question fully

Do not ...

- Tell the story
- Make general unsupported assertions
- Ignore the text or insert long extracts
- Spend too much time on one aspect of the question
- Learn and recite quotations from critics
- Off-load irrelevant background material, summaries of critical opinions, etc.
- Write on a different question

LTA4 Section B – Poetry

Assessment Objectives for LTA4 Section B

AO5ii	Contexts	40%
AO1	Clear communication	20%
AO2ii	Knowledge & understanding	20%
AO3	Form, structure & language	20%

AO5 Contexts

Which comes first - the context or the text?

The text!

- Classify the poem (Wordsworth) or poems (the other texts) into themes or topics
- Identify two key extracts for each theme to know in detail
- Look for patterns in the poem/extracts
- Use the rest of the poetry for brief reference
- Think creatively - apply what you know to the question before you

How to answer Section B

- Write cogently - make each sentence develop your answer
- Always keep the question in mind
- Use frequent brief quotations and/or accurate references to the poetry
- Consider each section of the question fully

Do not ...

- Give an account of the poem or poems
- Make general unsupported assertions
- Ignore the text or insert long extracts
- Spend too much time on one aspect of the question
- Spend time on the context at the expense of the poetry
- Off-load irrelevant background material
- Write down all you have learnt in the hope that something will be relevant
- Write on a different question

Summary

Examiners' pet hates

These may seem trivial to you – but they are also easy to avoid, so why not remember them and make your marker a little bit happier? If your writing is hard to read, work at it – ask for help (don't be proud: it's too important), make it larger, use alternate lines, use a better pen – anything to avoid your carefully chosen words being wasted because nobody can read them!

- Not putting the question number on the cover (or even beside the answer)
- Bad handwriting – it really matters if the examiner can't make sense of your work!
- Careless expression, slang
- 'Negative/positive' and other simplifications
- Treating literature as soap opera (for example, this comment on *Othello*: 'Bianca shouted at Cassio for him not ringing her.')

It's as easy as A B C!

Answer the question

Base it on the text

Clear, coherent and cogent in your writing

We wish you success in your examinations!