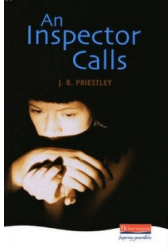


# English Department Exam Guide



## Essay with extract —Post-1914 Prose/Drama

**What:** a 45 minute essay with an extract to use as a springboard

**Where:** English Literature Component 2, section A

### Time management

**First 5 minutes:** create a bullet-point plan of around 5 key points you will make, for example 5 ways a character is presented. Include the extract where it is helpful.

**Remaining 40 minutes:** write a detailed paragraph for each point. Use PEA and ensure you include words from the question. Include close references at all times and quotations where you can. Zoom in on key words in your quotations.



### SPaG alert!

There are 5 marks available so be careful!

**AO1**—read, understand, respond

**AO2**—analyse language, structure and form

**AO4**—SPaG

### Question types

- Presentation of character
- Presentation of relationship between characters
  - Importance of character
- Presentation/importance of theme (e.g. family, friendship, fear)
  - Tension or drama

### Presentation of character

Begin with first impressions and end with how they are last seen. Middle points should cover how they change.

### Presentation of relationship

As with characters, begin with how it first comes across and end with the last time we see the characters' relationship. Middle points should cover how it changes and why. Remember not to talk about 'the relationship' but a character's relationship to another. For example, Ralph's relationship towards Piggy and Piggy's to Ralph. It won't be the same from each point of view!

### Importance of a character

This is different as the character might have an influence on something when they're not present. Start with the first time they have an impact and end with the last time. Middle points should cover how their importance becomes greater or lessens.

### Opening and ending:

Start with a single sentence answer.

End with a single sentence explanation of what changed and why (or why not).

### Presentation or importance of theme

Begin with where the theme first emerges and end with its climax. Middle points should cover how the theme develops. For importance, you also need to explore the way the theme influences characters and plot.

### Tension or drama

Tension or drama should build to the climax. Begin with the first tense or dramatic event and end with the story's conclusion. Middle points should cover the way tension or drama builds to the climax.

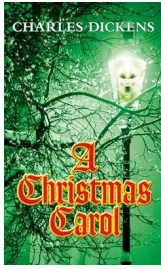
### Top Tips

A 'close reference' is a specific detail - ask yourself whether you could find that moment in the story. If not, you're being vague.

You cannot achieve AO2 unless you analyse some quotations. The extract will help but you must have some more. The shorter, the better.

Every single thing you say must directly answer the question.

# English Department Exam Guide



## Essay with extract —19th century prose

**What:** a 45 minute essay with an extract to use as a springboard

**Where:** English Literature Component 2, section B

### Time management

**First 5 minutes:** create a bullet-point plan of around 5 key points you will make, for example 5 ways a character is presented. Include the extract in where it is helpful.

**Remaining 40 minutes:** write a detailed paragraph for each point. Use PEA and ensure you include words from the question. Include close references at all times and quotations where you can. Zoom in on key words in your quotations.

### Context

Only bring in context where understanding a difference in 19th and 21st century audiences actually matters to the question!

### Presentation of character

Begin with first impressions and end with how they are last seen. Middle points should cover how they change.

### Presentation of relationship

As with characters, begin with how it first comes across and end with the last time we see the characters' relationship. Middle points should cover how it changes and why. Remember not to talk about 'the relationship' but a character's relationship to another. For example, Ralph's relationship towards Piggy and Piggy's to Ralph. It won't be the same from each point of view!

### Importance of a character

This is different as the character might have an influence on something when they're not present. Start with the first time they have an impact and end with the last time. Middle points should cover how their importance becomes greater or lessens.

### Opening and ending:

Start with a single sentence answer.

End with a single sentence explanation of what changed and why (or why not).

**AO1**—read, understand, respond

**AO2**—analyse language, structure and form

**AO3**—importance of context

### Question types

- Presentation of character
- Presentation of relationship between characters
  - Importance of character
- Presentation/importance of theme (e.g. family, friendship, fear)
  - Tension or drama

### Presentation or importance of theme

Begin with where the theme first emerges and end with its climax. Middle points should cover how the theme develops. For importance, you also need to explore the way the theme influences characters and plot.

### Tension or drama

Tension or drama should build to the climax. Begin with the first tense or dramatic event and end with the story's conclusion. Middle points should cover the way tension or drama builds to the climax.

### Top Tips

A 'close reference' is a specific detail - ask yourself whether you could find that moment in the story.

If not, you're being vague.

You cannot achieve AO2 unless you analyse some quotations. The extract will help but you must have some more. The shorter, the better.

Every single thing you say must directly answer the question.

# English Department Exam Guide



## Unseen Poetry Essay (a)

**What:** a **20 minute** essay based on a previously-unseen poem

**Where:** English Literature Component 2, section C

### Time management

**Up to 5 minutes:** read poem three times: once for a general feel, again to understand the subject and a third time to annotate interesting words or phrases. Don't forget there will be a summary of the topic at the top of the page.

**At least 15 minutes:** track through the poem, analysing words or phrases from every few lines.

### The question

Write about the poem \_\_\_\_\_, and its effect on you.

He toys with words,  
letting them go cold  
as gristly meat,  
until I relent  
and let him wriggle free:  
a fish returning  
to its element,

### Unseen Poetry (a)

#### Essay technique and structure

Begin with an overview, summing up what the poem is about and the overall tone or mood, which may change.

Track through the poem, selecting words or phrases from every few lines to analyse. Identify and explain key poetic techniques—don't just spot them. You get marks for analysis, not labelling.

Give the poet's aim in writing at the end.

The poem 'Slow Reader' describes a child who does not enjoy reading, even though his parent is desperate for him to. The poem starts off with a positive tone but ends quite sadly or regretfully.

...

The boy is described as letting words 'go cold/as gristly meat'. This is a very unpleasant simile and suggests that the boy is unable to understand these words, as gristle is something people would not usually want to eat. It could suggest that the words are of no use to the boy as gristle is usually left behind as inedible.

The speaker says 'I relent' to imply that he has been trying hard to force the boy to read but, eventually, has to give up. It is as if the boy has 'won'. The boy can then 'wiggle free' as though he has been held against his will and forced to attempt to read. 'Wriggle' suggests a struggle or impatience which makes me think that he has been very unhappy when being made to try to read. He could have become frustrated because he finds it so difficult.

...

I think the poet's aim is to show that you cannot force your likes and dislikes onto a child. It could also suggest that children can be very different to their parents as the speaker is unable to make his child share his passion for reading.

### How to analyse

The poems will never have complex, hidden meanings. What they are about on the surface is what you must write about. The question paper will also say what they're both about right at the top.

You don't have time to pick out many quotes so analyse what you're confident about—skip parts you're less sure of.

Link every single point back to the topic of the poem—never analyse quotes in isolation.

Never waste time counting stanzas or describing rhyme schemes.

# English Department Exam Guide



## Unseen Poetry Essay Comparison (b)

**What:** a **40 minute** essay comparing a second unseen poem to that in (a)

**Where:** English Literature Component 2, section C

### Time management

**5 minutes:** read the new poem three times, selecting similar or different features on the third reading.

**20 minutes:** track through poem (b), analysing words or phrases from every few lines

**15 minutes:** compare the two poems

### The question

Now compare \_\_\_\_\_ to the poem from section (a).

You deserve a magician. We all do.  
And that fake pencil-line moustache, which fell off?  
Don't be like him. Just you be true to you.  
Do what you do, my son. It'll be enough.

### Unseen Poetry (b)

#### Essay technique and structure

Begin with an overview of the second poem, summing up what it is about and the key similarities and differences to poem (a).

Track through poem (b), selecting words or phrases from every few lines to analyse. Use the exact same structure as for (a)

Compare and contrast the two poems. Identify and explain key poetic techniques and make links between the ways they are used in each poem.

'Poem for a Birthday' describes a very bad magician at the speaker's son's birthday party several years ago. The tone is quite humorous and positive. As with 'Slow Reader', the poem is written from a father's point of view and is thinking about the son's abilities. However, this poem has a more optimistic message, saying that whatever the son chooses to do will be the right thing. Unlike 'Slow Reader', this poem is written as if being spoken directly to the son.

...

When the speaker says 'you deserve a magician' he is suggesting the son should have all the great things in life. After this, there is an aside where he remembering 'that fake pencil-line moustache' which sounds like he can't stop going back to how bad the party magician was. It could also be sharing an in-joke with his son and shows how personal the poem is.

The speaker does not want his son to try to be something he is not, saying 'don't be like him'. This direct command makes it clear the speaker feels strongly. When he ends with 'it'll be enough' this is a very encouraging phrase and suggests there is no way the speaker could be disappointed as long as the son is 'true to you'. 'Enough' makes it seem as if he doesn't want to pressurise his son into being the best.

...

The speaker in 'Slow Reader' tries to force his son to read, holding him on his lap until he 'wiggles free'. Instead of saying the child can 'just do what you do', the speaker forces the son to try to read even though he dislikes it. The speaker in 'Slow Reader' lists good things the child can do such as 'tell jokes' but this doesn't seem to be 'enough' as the speaker in 'Poem for a Birthday' would feel. When the speaker in the first poem says the son is afraid he will 'never run quite free again' it suggests the parent is restraining him by forcing him to be good at something he dislikes. In contrast, Dunn says his son should 'be true to you' so he will allow him the freedom to do what feels right.

...

I much prefer Dunn's message, compared to Feaver's. He wants his son to realise that everyone has their own talents and that he should not try to be something he is not. I really like that final sentence 'It'll be enough.' as it suggests that there is no way the son can disappoint his father.