



STRENGTHENED GCSE ENGLISH LITERATURE

UNIT 1 EXEMPLAR MATERIAL

Following the January 2015 series for the unitised Welsh specification, WJEC has produced marked exemplar material for the Unit 1 Section A strengthened questions. This document comprises of marked exemplar and a link to the [Principal Examiner's report](#) which centres will find invaluable when preparing their students for the increased rigour of the strengthened specification and its focus on AO4. The paper and mark scheme can be accessed via the [secure website](#) should centres wish to use it as preparation for the summer exams.

Unit One – Higher Tier

Question 1(c)

'Of Mice and Men is Steinbeck's protest against the unfairness of American society in the 1930s'. To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Throughout the novel, we are greeted by characters who are facing different problems with unfairness of American society. Firstly, we have Curley's wife. The fact that she is not named in the novel shows that she is Curley's possession. The writer shows the aspects of American society in the 1930's by the men on the ranch manipulating her and not giving her attention. Which moves us on to Curley. Curley does not give his wife attention on the ranch so Curley's wife is forced to go around and find the attention she craves from other men.

Another point is that the men under-estimate Curley's wife. She says to Lennie, "You know what I can do to you if you open your trap?" This could show how the other men on the ranch do not expect a woman to be intimidating in any way, and she has to get her point across that she is human. The writer shows how Curley's wife is alienated and ostracised. The novel shows a lot about sexism and discrimination in American using the character Curley's wife. Some grasp of context and how it affects C's wife.

We are also introduced to Crooks, who is facing the problems of racism and discrimination because he is black and has a disability. The writer shows the racism by his views on the theme of the American Dream. Crooks does not believe in the American dream because of the way he has been treated his whole life. I think that the reason he has no hope in the American dream is because he knows realistically that hardly anyone will get the chance to live their dream. He knows this because he has seen many people fail. The way Crooks is treated on the ranch is simply disgraceful. He is alienated and isolated because he is black. Also the way he is treated has had a massive effect on him. Crooks has been mistreated and discriminated so long that even he believes that it's wrong to be black. Crooks says, "I ain't nothing but a nigger," showing that he thinks he is nothing compared to white people.

I think that even the fact that his nickname is "Crooks" shows how he is mistreated because he has a disability. The way he is treated is quite similar to Curley's wife. This is because they both have no real name or life. OK

Steinbeck also used the character of Candy to represent how ageism was present in the 1930's. He shows this by Candy wanting to shoot himself after his dog has been shot. Candy wants to shoot himself because he is portrayed as worthless. I think that Candy has such a strong bond with his dog because the other men don't talk to him much because he is old, so he has to rely on his dog. When the dog gets shot by Carlson, this leaves Candy feeling so alienated and isolated because he has nobody to talk to.

In my opinion, I think that *Of Mice and Men* is a great representation of the unfairness of American society in the 1930's. I think this because of all the characters that are included in these problems are discriminated massively. I think that the audience will feel sympathy towards the characters because they know their stories. I think that writing a book is useful to protest against something because the readers will feel sympathy and then they might realise the problems of the American society in the 1930's. The writer has presented the unfairness of society in the 1930's by the main themes of the novel. Themes like the

focus on question

vague here

American dream, isolation, racism, sexism, ageism, friendship and animal imagery all link differently towards the unfairness of society in the 1930's. The fact that the writer shows they characters being very discriminated and not having attention gives off a very sympathetic vibe that you should feel sorry for the characters being alienated. I laos think that people would look to this book and reflect on what it was like to be alive at the time, The readers would probably make the unfairness personal, so they would put themselves in the character's shoes. The themes have a massive effect on me massively, so the writer could change the views on other people in the society and possibly even stop the discrimination.

rather
general

Examiner comment:

Identifies characters treated unfairly, some reference to contextual factors. Becomes general. **Mark: 10.**

Unit One – Higher Tier

Question 1(c)

'Of Mice and Men is Steinbeck's protest against the unfairness of American society in the 1930s'. To what extent do you agree with this statement?

In 'John Steinbecks novel 'Of Mice and Men there is a protest against the unfairness of American society in the 1930's. I agree with this statement because we know that Lennie was picked on by Curley for being childish and not understanding things and Curley used this to scare Lennie, we know this because 'He was kinda feelin' you out. He figures he's got you scared'. **Knows the text but narrow view of context.**

We also know that Curley's wife was treated unfairly. We know this because in the novel she is not allowed to talk to anybody besides Curley but we also know that she was quite a 'Tart' as she is always going into the huts where the ranch workers are staying and flirting with them.

some ref to character

We also see the unfair treatment on Crooks who is treated unfairly for being black and having a "crippled back", he is only allowed to sleep in a small hut next to the stables with a few of his own belongings and he does not like anybody else being in there so he kicks them out. Candy is also treated unfairly because he has one hand missing and is the oldest on the ranch so people are always telling him that his 'dog should be shot' because it is really old and useless.

aware of
context but
implied

In conclusion to this I agree with the statement 'Of Mice and Men is Steinbecks protes against the unfairness of American society in the 1930's, because in almos every part of the story at least one character is being taken advantage of including, Curley's wife, Lennie, Crooks, and Candy.

Examiner comment:

Brief but accurate reference to characters. Very limited awareness of context beyond the ranch. **Mark: 8.**

Unit One – Higher Tier

Question 1(b)

How does John Steinbeck use the character of Curley's wife to highlight some aspects of American society in the 1930s?

Curley's wife can be seen as a character that portrays and encompasses what it was like to be a victim of society during this dark period of the Great Depression (1930's) whereby how you looked like, who you were and how wealthy you were determined your quality of life. In this patriarchal society isolation and loneliness from the outside world was not at all uncommon and many suffered greatly because of discrimination in this dark age.

reference to main features of context.

Loneliness and discrimination is at the heart of this novel and Curley's wife seems to display this through her lonely character.

links between character and context

Curley's wife seems to be a character who is isolated and marginalised throughout the novel. Steinbeck writes: "A girl was standing there looking in."

The above metaphor shows how Curley's wife seems to never quite fit in and can imply that she is always on the sidelines never quite being allowed to participate with normal activities with the everyone else.

interesting detail

Furthermore the noun 'girl' can tell us that Curley's wife is simply a naïve and simply minded girl who is unable to participate on account of her immature personality. On the other hand, the noun 'girl' can further indicate that Curley's wife is simply infantilised and not given the chance to take part in her life.

thoughtful pt, could be developed

Or being the only 'girl' on the ranch means that she can never truly be accepted due to the time at which women were seen as inferior to men and simply not 'capable' to be a part of anything.

Curley's wife seems to be care about her appearance a lot despite living on a dirty ranch. Steinbeck writes: "She has fully rouged lips... Her fingernails were red". The overuse and repetition of the colour red can foreshadow a great event in the novel. The colour red has many connotations for example that of prostitution, love, danger, anger and blood. This colour that Steinbeck has chosen to mention repeatedly is no coincidence and could be used to warn and foreshadow the end of the novel whereby Curley's wife can be seen to start a series of events that subsequently end Lennie and George's dream.

some discussion of detail

On the other hand, the girl in weed who made George and Lennie run away was also wearing a red dress which can further indicate that the colour red symbolises a bad omen and catastrophe in the novel.

To link to the question Curley's wife mistreatment by society and her own husband has lead her to become an 'attention seeker' – (the colour red stands out) and consequently to ruin other people's chances at happiness.

Due to the extreme sexism of a patriarchal society of the 1930s Curley's wife seems to be trapped in her own body and unable to have the freedom of a happy life. Steinbeck writes: "ostrich feathers". Curley's wife is said to be wearing shoes trimmed with ostrich feathers. An

ostrich (unlike) other birds is a flightless bird which cannot have the freedom to control many aspects of its life. This can symbolise Curley's wife's similar imprisonment on the ranch and of her own body. **interesting pt**

Additionally, Curley's wife's lack of control and inferiority to the other men on the ranch can be seen through Steinbeck's clever use of the apostrophe to symbolise that Curley's wife is a possession of her husband; simply a sex object meant for Curley's own impure desires and intentions. She is simply a trophy wife only there to be shown off by Curley. **clear explanation**

Furthermore, Curley's wife is not given a name which shows how women at that time of the 1930's weren't equal to men and sometimes even basic human rights weren't given to them because of their belief in a male dominated society.

**sees link
between context
and character**

As a consequence of the constant neglect, bullying and harassment of Curley's wife for example being called names such as a 'tart', a 'whore' and 'jail bait', Curley's wife causes her hurt and anger to hurt and break the only other person on the ranch that is lower than her on the social hierarchy; Crooks. Steinbeck writes: "I could get you strung up on a tree so easy, it ain't even funny." The fact that Curley's wife ultimately resorts in using racism to bully Crooks shows her mean character, however by hurting Crooks Curley's wife is able to feel more significant and powerful enough to decide someone's fate. This boosts her self-esteem and self-worth. **thoughtful use of events**

Curley's wife only seems to be happy when she is dead. Steinbeck writes: "all the meanness and discontent all gone... sweet and young." The fact that Curley's wife's true innocence is only shown when she is dead shows just how society had corrupted her mind into believing that she was worthless and useless. **focus on question**

Although at the end Curley's wife is also described to look young and fragile, it is not in an infantilising and patronising way and displays her purity and how by simply being of the opposite gender her quality of life is significantly decreased.

She is shown as being one of the many victims in the novel but also ultimately she is seen as a racist and although this is extremely wrong she is simply attempting to see herself as more important and significant than society has given her credit for, because of the negative light that women were seen in.

Examiner comment:

Strong focus on question, clear understanding of how context affects character. Thorough discussion. Mark: 15.

Unit One – Foundation Tier

Question 1(b)

Write about Curley's wife and the ways in which she is affected by American society in the 1930s.

Think about:

- What you learn about her past;
- Her relationship with Curley;
- Her relationships with others.

Curley's wife is affected by American society in the 1930s because she is the only woman at the ranch, and it is hard for her to get along with other people because she is married to Curley. Curley's wife does not have a real name which emphasises the point she is Curley's possession. Curley's wife is described as 'Jail bait'. Which might suggest she is always looking for trouble. We first hear about Curley's wife when Candy was explaining to George she is a 'tart'. We learn in her past that her mother did not allow her to be in the 'movies' so she married Curley. There is no relationship between Curley and his wife, as they never see each other because they are always looking for each other. 'have you guys seen Curley'. Steinbeck creates tension because Curley's wife looks for attention, and by bullying the ranch hands. *could develop*

valid pt

some ref.

Knows the text

She does not get along with the people because they think she is brutal and that she will do anything to get rid of them. The author has sympathy for Curley's wife because she never has the time to see Curley, and the only reason she is with him is because she wanted to leave her mother. As the men go out on the Saturday night only Crooks, Lennie and Candy are left behind. She took advantage by teasing them and making fun of them. When Crooks tells her to get out of his room, she shouts at him I could get you 'strung up a tree'. *More specific here*

Towards the end of the novel she gets killed by Lennie. She is killed because she was not aware of Lennie's strength and Curley's wife asks him to feel her hair. Then she yells and yells and Lennie broke her neck. *narrative*

not quite

My summary is that Curley's wife is a lonely person who does not have the time to be with Curley. And her dream to be in the movies did not work out. She is a cruel person who everybody hates at the ranch. No one at the ranch understands what she is going through. She died towards the end of the novel.

Examiner comment:

Limited awareness of contextual factors.

Some understanding of main features of character and her story. Beginning to select relevant events. **Mark: 12.**

hint of character

needs ref to events

Unit One – Foundation Tier

Question 1(c)

Choose a character from *Of Mice and Men* who you think is treated unfairly by the community in which he or she lives. Write about this character, explaining the reasons for your choice.

From 'Of Mice and Men' I think that Crooks is treated very unfairly by the colour of his skin. Crooks is a very lonely character in the book 'Of Mice and Men' Crooks has no company he isn't aloud to speak to anyone and he has his own little room where he keeps his precious stuff with him. Crooks has alot of shoes? this shows that he didn't travel alot but in the 1930s migrant woers use to travel alot and look for jobs. touches on historical setting

aware of cultural factors

horseshoes?

Crooks also has alot of 'dirty books' on his shelf this gives me the impression on him being very lonely and also this tells me that he is aducates which was unusal in the 1930s times because migrent workers did'nt have an education because they were too busy looking out for jobs so that they can feed their family. At the olden times the migrant workers and the community people used to treat black people as slaves which is prejudice. Crooks looks after the horses he has alot of medicion in his room for the horses and for himself. under-developed but relevant

grasp of impact of context

He's always being ignored he thinks 'it's just a nigger saying it' this shows that no one cares in what he says because it's just a black guy saying it, back in the olden times Crooks use to live with his family but he was forbidden to play with whites and his family was the only black family there. relevant detail

detailed ref

Crooks did'nt believe Lennie when Lennie told him about the dream he thought that was 'nuts' because he knew that everyone wanted a dream to live off 'the fatter land' but no ones dream come true. features of character

all Crooks wanted is someone to talk to but no one cares about him. Everyone calls him 'Crooks' because he has a crooked back and he can't stand up and his back is not straight because he's been kicked by a horse.

When Lennie told Crooks about his dream he could'nt believe it because he knew it was never going to happen.

Examiner comment:

Disorganised response but sets text quite securely in context and makes links between contextual factors and main features of character. 14/15 Mark: 15.

Unit One – Foundation Tier

Question 1(b)

Write about Curley's wife and the ways in which she is affected by American society in the 1930s.

Think about:

- **What you learn about her past;**
- **Her relationship with Curley;**
- **Her relationships with others.**

Curley's wife shows us the treatment of women in America in the 1930's. The character, Curley's wife, informs us with the impression that, women in the 1930's in America, were treated as items, or possessions, which were given no respect by men – this is given away as we are not even told Curley's wife's real name, it's as if now she belongs to Curley, and is not even entitled to a name of her own! We find out that Curley's wife's relationship with Curley, is not at all good, he never give her attention, and leaves her lonely, this is why she always seems to be looking for some sort of companionship with anyone! The only time we see Curley and his wife together, is when she is dead, and even then he doesn't seem at all upset, he just wants revenge off Lennie, for taking something which 'belonged to him'. We find throughout the whole novel Curley's wife looking for some sort of companionship, to aid her loneliness. Really, Curley's wife is exactly the same as the ranch men – lonely and looking for someone. We are told Curley's wife searches for such companionship, "like a ghost"; Candy says "she can move quietly". Curley's wife's relationship with the characters on the ranch is not good either. She is described by them as "poison", "a tart" and "a rat trap". Curley's wife tries to get attention of the men by flirting and wearing provocative clothing. Curley's wife looks completely out of place on the ranch with her face "heavily made up" and her "full rouged lips". Throughout the novel, Curley's wife is described as wearing the colour Red, the colour red is associated with sex and danger, and is also the colour of the devil, this foreshadows that she spells trouble, especially with Lennie. *A lot of thoughtful points here.*

confident use of context to shed light on character

explains character

clear use of text

nice pt, aptly supported

Lennie instantly takes a liking to Curley's wife, as he says she is "purty", but George warns him to stay away from her, as he has "seen people like tha' before, poison". Lennie really did try to keep his distance, but as she "moved so quietly", it was really difficult for him to do so. In Chapter Five, Curley's wife find Lennie alone, so goes to try and aid her ache for companionship and attention. At first Lennie is reluctant, Curley's wife soon gets mad "you think I don't want to talk to somebody every once in a while? I get awful lonely", she gets her way and soon starts speaking to him about her past, her dreams and her relationship with Curley. Curley's wife confides in Lennie, as she knows he wont remember what she said so therefore wont repeat it. Curley's wife tells Lennie about her dream of being in the "pictures" and the "movies". Curley's wife comes across as pretty naïve, to think her dream got crushed by her mother hiding the letter from her. We can tell that there was no letter and there was never going to be, the man saying differently was obviously lying to get into her pants. Curley's wife's naivety brought her to marrying Curley. She tells Lennie how she only married

echoes text

fair inference!

him to “get away from her mother”, this leading her to live the depressing life which she live, full of loneliness, isolation and dreams.

Towards the end of the book, Lennie and Curleys wife find something in common, they both like soft things, Curleys wife tells Lennie how she likes to “stroke her soft hair” and she asks him if he wants to feel it. Lennie starts stroking Curleys wife’s hair, but soon starts to stroke to hard, she “cries out” for Lennie to stop, by crying out Lennie panicks and “holds on to her mouth with his big paws”, inadentally Lennie ends up breaking Curleys wife’s neck, leaving her dead. The author, John Steinbeck, then says how the “ache for attention left her face with the meannes”. he describes how she looked young and pretty, and perhaps even happy lying there dead. We suddenly start to feel sorry for her, throughout most of the novel, we took an instant dislike to her, just because she wanted attention but now dead, we see a different side to her and think about how young she was, and how much of a horrible life she had to persue. Really, she was treated unfairly by the Ranch men. John Steinbeck shows this throughout the novel, it’s like the battle of the sexes, each gender criticising and putting each other into stereoptypes, but that’s how life was in American in the 1930’s, women were isolated and lonely, and couldn’t do nothing about it.

Examiner comment:

Clear grasp of social/historical factors with strong links made with character in some detail. Thorough discussion of character. Mark: 18.

Unit One – Foundation Tier

Question 1(c)

Choose a character from Of Mice and Men who you think is treated unfairly by the community in which he or she lives. Write about this character, explaining the reasons for your choice.

Candy is not treated really nice just ebcause he old he don’t get treated the same as the rest he had a dog he love to bit he lived in the bunkhouse with him and I think Calson got jealous and told CAnd they was going to shoot his dog then he shoot shot him. **Aware of character's story.**

I think Curleys wife is treated different as well because she been married to Curley for 2 weeks and hes always going out working so she gets lonley she gets called a tart and other stuff and she wants friends and when she was younger she got told she was going to be in te movies and go to hollywood but they had to send her a letter but that letter never come she her dream was ruinged her relation with Curley is OK but in the day he allway working and shes allways in the house alone

Examiner comment:

Some reference to main features of two characters. Limited detailed reference to text and very little explicit understanding of context shown. Mark: 10.

Unit One – Higher Tier

Question 3(b)

Show how Harper Lee uses the character of Atticus to highlight some aspects of American society at the time the novel is set.

Atticus plays an extremely important role in the novel 'To Kill a Mockingbird'. He could be described as the source of all knowledge who teaches us and the children about prejudice, empathy and fairness. *nice intro*

By Scout narrating the novel, us as readers, learn an awful lot about the prejudice that ran through American societies in the 1930s. Atticus decides to defend Tom Robinson, but is greatly criticised for this and knows he is "licked" before he begins. Atticus states to Scout and Jem that "When it's a white man's word against a black man's, the white man always wins. They're ugly but those are the facts of life." Harper Lee is presenting racism as Maycomb's "usual disease"; it is completely normal for a black man like Tom Robinson to be subject to racial prejudice. Atticus is illustrated as a contrast because he is completely un-prejudiced. Lee tells us through Atticus that "reasonable people go stark raving mad when anything involving a negro comes up." In the 1930's, white people believed they were better than the black community and never wished to be associated with them. Moreover, during the trial of Tom Robinson Atticus pleads with the jury to not convict Tom as guilty because of the solid evidence given. Lee explains to us through Atticus that Mayella Ewell did something that "in our society is unspeakable: She tempted a Negro." This further showcases that in American societies during the 1930s it was completely unacceptable for a white woman to be with a black man. We are told through Atticus that it is extremely likely for Tom Robinson to "go to the chair", simply because he is speaking against a white man in court. Even though it is clear that Tom Robinson is completely innocent, he will not win the court case against Bob Ewell; despite him being the "trash of Maycomb". *Sound understanding.*

Furthermore, Atticus explains to Scout about the Wall Street Crash. We are told through Atticus that the 'country folk' were affected the most: "The crash hit them the hardest." However, Lee showcases that most families in the southern states of America were badly affected by the Wall Street Crash. Through a conversation between Scout and Atticus, Atticus states "we are indeed" when questioned of they were poor. Through this very small conversation, Harper Lee shows us that the 'Wall Street Crash' affected almost everyone; even people with well respected jobs, such a lawyers (Atticus). Lee further makes us aware of the WPA when Atticus is explaining the traits of Bob Ewell. Atticus comments that "he was fired from the WPA for laziness." Lee uses this to portray the severeness of Bob Ewell's lazy attitudes. The WPA was a work force campaign set up to supply people with jobs that were made redundant during the 'Wall Street Crash'. *Detailed knowledge of setting, anchored in text.*

Although Atticus makes us aware of the negative aspects of southern societies; he is also an example for how attitudes are changing. Atticus is described by Miss. Maudie as "the only man in the county who can keep a jury out so long." Harper Lee expresses that if people can have unprejudiced mindsets for even a minute, there is hope for a future with equal rights. If led by the right people, the future will be a better place. This is very ironic because at the time the book was published in the 1960's, black people were campaigning for civil rights; with many white people by their sides.

Examiner comment:

Thoughtful and thorough, with secure and integrated reference to how context affects character. Mark: 18.

detail

clear grasp
of context

lots of
detailed
support

ref