**Component 4 Prose Study: Task-setting**

**Choose one of the following tasks and discuss:**

* **How the wording of the title might make it more difficult for the candidates to sustain a literary response and target the Assessment Objectives**
* **How the title could be reworded to help the candidate**

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| **Original wording of title** | **Potential pitfalls** | **Suggested rewording of title** |
| How is class and status represented throughout the two books (*The Great Gatsby* and *Atonement)* and how does it highlight the relationship between characters? | * Represent instead of ‘present’ undermines literary emphasis
* Encourages descriptive approach – no argument to promote
* Which characters? ‘relationship’ very wide-ranging
* Focus on class and status encourages contextual bias with sociological emphasis rather than literary, using texts to illustrate generalisations.
* In both texts class and status are nuanced and quite tricky for 17-year-olds to define – tend to generalise
* Isn’t wealth more important than class in both? Possibly less tricky to define and can encompass idea of class barriers?
* Can lead to reductive approach – no invitation to link to wider, more important themes in novels: guilt/atonement; creative control; hope/illusions; lost innocence, etc
* What about AO4? Should there be reminder to link texts?
 | ‘*While both writers acknowledge the attractions of wealth, they seem more concerned with warning of its destructive power.’*With this view in mind, compare and contrast the ways in which the writers present money and wealth in… |
| Compare and contrast the extent to which characters influence their own identities in *The Wasp Factory* and *We Need To Talk About Kevin* | * Not clear exactly what is meant here: is this intended as discussion of protagonists’ culpability or self-knowledge?
* Muddled sense of what is meant by a ‘character’ in a novel
* Encourages candidates to view characters as if real people with separate identities. Need to put emphasis on **writers’** presentation of characters and how they use them (as constructs) to explore wider issues.
* No clear argument. How can we compare the ‘extent’ of this?
* Very grim text combination!
 | *‘The writers make it almost impossible to sympathise with the central characters in both novels; they are not abused victims but knowing villains.’*With this view in mind, compare and contrast the ways in which the writers present their protagonists… |
| Explore the ways in which Valerie Martin and Jean Rhys use different forms of entrapment to inform the reader of the characters’ feelings and emotional states in *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Property.*  | * Focus on entrapment is appropriate but wording does not help candidate structure a clear argument
* Explore is very woolly and there is no invitation to compare and contrast here
* Seems to be focus on writers here but characters still treated as real people with ‘feelings and emotional states’
* Is emphasis the wrong way around? Aren’t writers more interested in forms of entrapment and using carefully constructed characters to convey their ideas on this?
 | ‘*Both writers demand our sympathy for heroines whose freedom and self-determination are gradually eroded by forces beyond their control.’*With this view in mind, compare and contrast the ways in which the writers present entrapment in … |
| ‘After all, the true seeing is within.’An exploration of vision and sight in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Atonement* | * Quoted view is not a critical view of the texts but an abstract or philosophical axiom. Complex and difficult way to view texts
* Confusing and potentially risky idea of ‘truth’ in fictional works – rarely helpful to candidates
* Vague term ‘exploration’ encourages descriptive approach rather than helping candidate structure a literary argument
* Promotes idea of characters as real people with interior worlds?
* No steers to towards AOs 2 or 4? Need to put emphasis on writers’ presentation of seeing.
 | *‘In both novels the writers confront the disquieting gap between appearance and reality, reminding us that the way we perceive the world is not necessarily shared by others.’*With this view in mind, compare and contrast the ways in which the writers present the complex nature of sight and perception in… |
| ‘Bigotry lies not just in our words, but in our actions, thoughts and institutions’An exploration of how status is presented in *The Handmaid’s Tale* and *The Help* via the writers’ use of colours. | * Statement is not a critical view of the texts and could be more closely linked to the rest of the title.
* There is a reminder to focus on ‘presentation’ but ‘exploration’ is vague and there is no steer towards AO4.
* Is ‘status’ a key theme or idea in either text? Is this encouraging a descriptive approach?
* What is meant by ‘status’? Quite wide-ranging/open-ended term here.
* Reference to writers’ use of ‘colour’ narrows task but not necessarily in a helpful way: will it be largely connected with description of the female characters’ clothes in *THT* and race in *TH*?
 | ‘*Both novelists depict worlds where bigotry and fear dominate and there is very little, if any, room for hope.’*With this view in mind, compare and contrast the ways in which the writers present the potential for hope in…  |