

AM SYLLABUS (2012)

ENGLISH

AM 10

SYLLABUS

English AM 10	(Available in September)
Syllabus	Paper 1(3 hrs)+Paper II (3 hrs)+Paper III(3 hrs)

Term of the Syllabus

This Syllabus for Matsec Advanced Level English (AM English) is valid for the May 2012 and September 2012 sessions, after which the 2013 syllabus will come into effect (see 'Appendix 1: Notes to Students and Teachers', below).

Aims

A course based on this Syllabus should enable the following to be achieved:

- competence in handling the English language accurately, with minimal errors in grammar and spelling;
- the ability to communicate ideas effectively and through coherent logic and structure in expression and argumentation;
- a knowledge of various aspects and variations of English style, and the ability to apply this knowledge to good effect and ideally with some evidence of stylishness and flair in one's own writing;
- repertoires of reading across a range of texts in English, both literary and non-literary;
- an introductory knowledge of tools for the critical analysis of literary and non-literary language;
- knowledge, mediated through introductory aspects of language study and linguistics, of the different structures, constituents and applications of the English language, in both its written and spoken forms;
- an understanding of the way in which writers use language, form, structure and rhetoric to shape and contribute to meaning;
- an understanding of the ways in which readers respond to, interpret and value texts;
- the development of critical sense in regard to different kinds of texts;
- the development of an ability for personal response to texts and the exercising of independent judgement in their analysis;
- the ability to respond to, describe, explain and comment on language;
- the ability to understand different forms and genres of written English in terms of ideas, intention, expression and appropriateness;
- the enjoyment and appreciation, in a disciplined and critical way, of literary and non-literary texts;
- adaptability across different tasks and purposes in the interpretation and expression of English.

Assessment Objectives

The examination will assess a candidate's ability to:

- write lucidly, fluently and accurately on of a number of subjects;
- use appropriate vocabulary and style;
- summarise or adapt material for a given purpose;
- demonstrate flexibility and adaptability in using studied material;
- demonstrate understanding of the content and purpose of previously unseen material, drawn from a wide variety of sources;
- respond with understanding to texts of different types and periods;
- understand the ways in which writers' choices of language, form, structure and rhetoric help to express meaning, outlook, attitude and tone;
- demonstrate knowledge of the contexts in which literary works are written and received;
- produce informed, independent and critical opinions and judgements;
- communicate clearly the knowledge, understanding and insight appropriate to literary studies;

- show understanding of some of the key constituents of language at word, clause, sentence and text level;
- show understanding of how meanings and forms in language are influenced by variations in mode and context, including personal, cultural and social factors.

Composition of the Examination and Subject Content

The English Advanced Examination is made up of three papers of three hours each, as follows:

Paper I (33.3% of global mark; 3 hours; one question to be chosen from each section)

Section A: Shakespeare (Involves the study of set texts, to answer on one play; see below).

Section B: Poetry (Involves the study of set texts, to answer on one poet; see below).

Section C: Literary Criticism : Poetry (based on an unseen text)

Paper II (33.3% of global mark; 3 hours; two questions to be chosen from Section A and one from Section B))

Section A: Novel (Involves the study of set texts, to answer two questions on two different novels).

Section B: Literary Criticism: Prose (based on an unseen extract)

Paper III (33.3% of global mark; 3 hours; one question to be chosen from each section)

Section A: Language Essay

Section B: Comprehension and Summary

Section C: Linguistics

Shakespeare

One question is to be answered. There will be two essay-type questions and one passage-based question on each of the following Shakespeare plays.

Julius Caesar

The Tempest

Othello

The recommended edition in each case is that to be found within the *Oxford School Shakespeare* series (but see also the note on this in the 'Appendix: Notes to Students and Teachers').

The passage-based question will require candidates to identify the context of the text and to relate the text to wider concerns (involving one or more issue relating to theme, imagery, characterisation, setting, time and action) within the play as a whole.

All questions require candidates to identify the major themes and issues explored within the play which they have studied; identify and examine a range of devices employed by Shakespeare (for example, language and imagery), exploring how these methods shape meaning; produce informed, independent opinions and critical judgements on the text studied; and communicate clearly the knowledge, understanding and insight appropriate to literary study.

Answers in this section must not be shorter than 400 words.

Poetry

One question is to be answered. There will be two essay-type questions on each of the collections set. The prescribed poems are the following:

John Keats: 'Lamia'; 'The Eve of St. Agnes'; 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci'; 'Bright Star! Would I Were Steadfast As Thou Art'; 'When I Have Fears That I May Cease To Be'; 'On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer'; 'Ode to a Nightingale'; 'Ode to Autumn'; 'Ode to a Grecian Urn'; 'On Sitting Down to Reading Lear Again'. Students should also read the following letters: 'Vale of Soul Making' – Letter to George and Georgiana Keats, 21 April 1819; 'Chamber of Maiden Thoughts' – Letter to John Hamilton Reynolds, 3 May 1818; 'Negative Capability/Intensity' – Letter to his brothers, 21 December 1817; 'Chameleon Poet' –

Letter to George and Georgiana Keats, 3 May 1819.

The poem 'On Sitting Down to Reading Lear Again', together with the Letters indicated, have been added to the Syllabus. 'Isabella' has been removed.

(A recommended text is *Bright Star: The Complete Poems and Selected Letters of John Keats* (Vintage, 2009), but other reliable texts by editors like Robert Gittings or John Barnard are acceptable.)

Wilfred Owen: 'Anthem for Doomed Youth'; 'S.I.W.'; 'Apologia pro Poemate Meo'; 'Futility'; 'Strange Meeting'; 'The Send-Off'; 'The Show'; 'The Chances'; 'Exposure'; 'Inspection'; 'At a Calvary near the Ancre'; 'The Dead-Beat'; 'Disabled'; 'Dulce et Decorum Est'; 'Greater Love'; 'Le Christianisme'; 'Mental Cases'; 'The Parable of the Old Man and the Young'; 'The Sentry'; 'Spring Offensive'. Students should also read 'Preface'. The poems *Asleep*; *A Terre*; *Conscious*; *Insensibility*; *The Last Laugh*; *Smile, Smile, Smile*; *Miners*; *The Next War* are no longer in the syllabus.

(The recommended text is Wilfred Owen, *The War Poems*, ed. Jon Stallworthy (Chatto & Windus, 1994)).

Emily Dickinson: 'I have never seen 'Volcanoes'; 'An awful tempest mashed the air'; 'I felt a Funeral, in my Brain'; 'A Clock stopped'; 'The soul selects her own society'; 'He scrambles at your soul'; 'After great pain, a formal feeling comes'; 'I dreaded that first Robin, so'; 'I heard a Fly Buzz – when I died'; 'This World is not Conclusion'; 'The Soul has Bandaged moments'; 'I tried to think a lonelier thing'; 'One need not be a chamber – to be haunted'; 'Because I could not stop for Death'; 'My Life has stood – a Loaded Gun'; 'The Loneliness one dare not sound'; 'Of Consciousness her awful Mate'; 'Drowning is not so pitiful'; 'One crucifixion is recorded – only'; 'Four can do all but raise the Dead'.

(The recommended text is *Emily Dickinson*, ed. Ted Hughes, (Faber and Faber, 2004), but other texts, like the Thomas A. Johnson edition published by Little Brown, are acceptable).

All questions require candidates to articulate informed and relevant responses that communicate effectively their knowledge and understanding of poetry; analyse the poet's use of such poetic devices as form, versification, diction, imagery, rhetoric, style and tone; demonstrate detailed critical understanding in analysing the ways in which structure, form and language shape meaning; produce informed, independent opinions and critical judgements on the text studied; and communicate clearly the knowledge, understanding and insight appropriate to literary study.

Answers in this question must not be shorter than 400 words.

Novel

Two questions are to be answered on two different novels. There will be one essay-type question and one passage-based question on each of the following novels:

Margaret Atwood: *The Handmaid's Tale*

Jane Austen: *Emma*

Charles Dickens: *Great Expectations*

Graham Greene: *The End of the Affair*

Graham Greene: *The Heart of the Matter*

Ian McEwan: *Atonement*

Evelyn Waugh: *A Handful of Dust*

All questions require candidates to identify the major themes and issues explored within the novel which they have studied; identify and examine a range of narrative devices employed by the author (for example, characterisation, plotting, imagery) exploring how these methods shape meaning; produce informed, independent and critical opinions on the text studied and communicate clearly the knowledge, understanding and insight appropriate to literary study.

In the case of passage-based questions, candidates will be expected to place the extract within its context and discuss its significance to the narrative. They may be asked to explore the thematic implications of the extract, highlighting pertinent links with the rest of the novel while possibly being required also to comment on imagery, characterisation, setting and time. Candidates are reminded that answers to the gobbet question should be firmly anchored in analysis of the extract and consequently they should refrain from regarding this question as a prompt to say all they know about the novel. Thus,

while encouraged to make connections with other parts of the text, these must be fully relevant to the extract in question.

Answers in this section must not be shorter than 400 words.

Literary Criticism

There are two unseen passages for critical commentary in the English AM Syllabus: a poetry passage in Paper I Section C, and a prose passage in Paper II Section B. In each case, examiners will be looking for appreciation as much as critique, as at this level what is looked for as much as anything is ability in the recognition and savouring of literary effect and of striking and stylish use of language. Indeed, one purpose of these passages is to allow students the opportunity to demonstrate sensitiveness to both the distinction and distinctiveness of literary language and effects. Students will also be expected to show awareness of the differences between poetry and literary prose, and to write about both in a manner that indicates familiarity with the tools of critical analysis, particularly in the identification and commentary of rhetorical devices and the use of critical terms and idiom. The unseen texts will need to be analysed in terms of aspects of theme, form, imagery, rhetoric, style and tone (though students will not be expected to write about *all* of these in one essay: on this point, see the paragraph on the rubric for the questions in these sections, below). Students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the aspects of the texts that are uncommon or singular. In poetry, an ability to comment on versification will further inform the assessment criteria, though distinctions between, for instance, iambic and trochaic structures in poetic lines will not be considered, at this level, a *sine qua non* of the literary criticism essay.

The prose passage will typically be chosen from a fictional text from the nineteenth century or later, and will not be longer than 600 words. Passages will be selected with a view to minimising cultural specificity. However, few passages can be absolutely free of certain contextual cues, and students should therefore not be alarmed to encounter one or two references to unfamiliar contexts in place and time, as marks will not be deducted in the case of those cues not being recognised.

The poem may be chosen from a broader range within literary history, but will not be one that is wilfully enigmatic or obscure, as the focus will be on candidates' ability to identify and appreciate poetic devices rather than to engage with anything that at this level might come across as cryptic. However, candidates may expect to exercise some interpretative skill in their commentary on the poem.

The wording of the rubric associated with the prose passage may follow this model, which is being given here for the guidance of students and teachers:

In this exercise of practical criticism, you are asked to write an appreciation of the passage below. You may wish to keep in mind some of the following considerations in your answer, and may also comment on any other aspect of the passage that you consider to be worthy of discussion.

- theme and motifs;
- pattern and form;
- character and personality;
- drama and crisis;
- imagery and rhetoric;
- style and tone;
- place, time and mood;
- idiom and register.

The wording of the rubric associated with the unseen poem may follow this model:

In this exercise of practical criticism, you are asked to write an appreciation of the poem below. You may wish to keep in mind some of the following considerations in your answer, and may also comment on any other aspect of the poem that you consider to be worthy of discussion.

- theme and motifs;
- form and structure;
- imagery and rhetoric;
- rhyme and metre;

style and tone;
place, time and mood.

Language Essay

The Language Essay provides an opportunity for candidates to write on a chosen topic employing an appropriate style. Candidates can draw on their own experiences and ideas, showing awareness of different forms of written and spoken expression and of the demands of a particular purpose or audience. Thought and discussion about current and philosophical issues, evaluation of experience and the exploration and practice of different kinds of creative writing will prepare candidates for this exercise. Candidates will be expected to write an essay of not less than 500 words, the title being chosen from a list of eight which will include examples of argumentative, narrative and descriptive essays.

Comprehension and Summary

Throughout the course, candidates are encouraged to read widely in order to develop language skills and to extend their conceptual horizons and reading repertoires. This exercise will test intensive reading comprehension skills of previously unseen material. The text for Comprehension will be a non-literary passage. It will be taken from newspapers, periodicals or other non-literary sources. Questions will test the ability to read for understanding, to give the meaning of selected words, to deduce writer's intentions and to analyse the language and structures which are employed. Summary skills will be tested in a question requiring the selection of appropriate material from the given passage and its adaptation for a given purpose.

Linguistics

This component provides an introductory experience of some aspects of Linguistics aimed at enabling candidates to deepen their interest and enjoyment in the use of English while introducing them to the concepts and methods of linguistic study in relation to spoken and written forms. The course provides understanding and practice that is gauged in range and depth as to contribute to the candidate's own attainment of the overall aims of this syllabus.

Candidates should be prepared for this component through Alan Gardiner, *English AS & A2* (Pearson, 2008)

Topics to be covered are: Word Classes, Phrases, Sentence Types, Cohesion, Morphology, Semantics, Difference between Speech and Writing, Non-Literary texts, Literary texts, Dialects, Sociolects, Idiolects, SE and RP, Register, Sexism, Political Correctness, Taboo.

There will be three questions from which candidates will be required to answer one. The questions may be essay type questions and/or task based.

Appendix 1: Notes to Students and Teachers

Pre-requisites and Validity

The Syllabus assumes knowledge of English Language at SEC Level. English Literature at SEC Level, while not an obligatory requirement, is recommended, as experience has shown that it helps students acquire a reader competence in the literature-related components of the Syllabus.

The Syllabus is valid for the following sessions: May 2012, September 2012. After these dates, the *Syllabus for May 2013 and later*, which will feature a Spoken English component and a revised structure to Paper III, will come into effect (please refer to the appropriate documentation and websites).

Quality of Language in Student Answers

It cannot be sufficiently emphasised that candidates will be assessed on their ability to organise and present information, ideas, descriptions and arguments *clearly and logically*, taking into account *accuracy* in their use of grammar, punctuation and spelling. In *all* questions across *all* papers, marks awarded will take into account the quality of the language used by the candidate.

Use of Prepared Material

The examiners recognise that students will seek to make use of prepared material in their answers, and that teachers invest significant effort in helping students put together such material, which may be derived from lecture and study notes, model essays, critical material, etc. However, it must be stressed that there are significant risks in the use of rehearsed material that fails to reflect and adapt itself to the specificities of the essay questions set in the examination. Students are therefore strongly urged not to reproduce memorised essays which may have scant bearing upon the question asked, and to make an effort to adapt their study and their prepared material, as needed, in their answers. Failure to do so too often results in answers that are 'out of point'.

Specimen Paper

A specimen paper for this syllabus shall be available at <http://www.um.edu.mt/matsec>

Grade Descriptors

A detailed schedule of grade descriptors, setting out the percentage range of marks within each grade, is available at the Matsec English Advanced and Intermediate Level Resources Website, at <http://www.um.edu.mt/matsec>. Teachers are advised to mark tutorial essays in a manner that reflects this schedule, as it will help to achieve consistency between what happens within schools and colleges on the one hand and marking practice within the Advanced Level examination on the other.

AM English Resource and Item Bank

The Syllabus Panel will be making available at the following website a Resource and Item Bank: <http://www.um.edu.mt/matsec>. The Bank will be coordinated by a Moderator who, in consultation with the Panel, will on a periodical basis edit and upload for use in the Advanced Level English classroom a selective range of resources, specimen questions, etc.

Literary Criticism

Experience has shown that teachers tend to select their own material in lecture preparation for this component of the course. This has worked well in the past and continues to be encouraged, but teachers who may wish to consult published material may consult Steven Croft and Helen Cross, *Literature, Criticism and Style*, 2nd rev. edn (Oxford University Press, 2001), Steven Croft, *Success in English Literature: A Practical Guide to Working with Unseen Texts at Advanced Level* (Oxford University Press, 2000), or similar guides.

Comprehension and Summary

As with passages for literary criticism, experience has shown that teachers tend to select their own material in lecture preparation for this component of the course and this has led to good results in the

past. However, teachers who may wish to consult published material for this component may refer to texts like the following:

Linguistics

Apart from using the recommended Alan Gardiner text in the classroom, teachers are advised to use Victor Fromkin, Robert Rodman and Nina Hyams, *An Introduction to Language*, 8th International Edition (Heinle, 2006) as a resource text to supplement their lecture preparation.

Reference to Literary Critics, Theorists, Linguists

Reference to literary critics and theorists does not make up part of the assessment criteria at Advanced Level. Familiarity with, for instance, feminism, New Historicism, postcolonialism, poststructuralism or the finer points of narratology is certainly not expected. In other words, it is possible to score high marks in essays that do not refer to such approaches or to the figures that deploy them. However, the examiners may choose to award evidence of broader reading within an author's work or across critique of that author, and/or reference to critics and theorists if these are discerningly and appropriately (rather than tokenistically) used.

By the same token, reference to authorities in the field of Linguistics is not expected at Advanced Level—not unless their work is specifically covered in the Linguistics component of the course. As with Literary Criticism, however, examiners may exercise their discernment and discretion in rewarding appropriate and productive reference that might be considered to enhance a student answer.

Recommended Usage

The following usage is recommended, though marks will not be forfeited if students use appropriate alternatives:

- possessives for words ending in s should be written as 's, hence *Keats's* or *Dickens's*.
- *-ise* is preferred to *-ize*.
- Pluralised forms of date ranges should not use the apostrophe, hence *1930s*, *1800s*.
- Single quotation marks should be placed around cited material in in-text citations, hence 'For Brutus is an honourable man ...'. Longer quotations should be indented and set off from the main text of the essay, in which case quotation marks are not necessary.
- Titles of individual poems should be given within single quotation marks; titles of novels or plays or linguistics and other book-length texts should be underlined.