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91472



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Level 3 English, 2017

91472 Respond critically to specified aspect(s) of studied written text(s), supported by evidence

2.00 p.m. Tuesday 14 November 2017
Credits: Four

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Respond critically to specified aspect(s) of studied written text(s), supported by evidence.	Respond critically and convincingly to specified aspect(s) of studied written text(s), supported by evidence.	Respond critically and perceptively to specified aspect(s) of studied written text(s), supported by evidence.

Check that the National Student Number (NSN) on your admission slip is the same as the number at the top of this page.

Write ONE essay in this booklet.

Check that this booklet has pages 2–12 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

YOU MUST HAND THIS BOOKLET TO THE SUPERVISOR AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.

Merit

TOTAL

05

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You should aim to write a concise essay of no more than 5 pages in length. The quality of your writing is more important than the length of your essay.

In your essay, discuss the extent to which you agree with your chosen statement. Respond critically to the statement by making a close analysis of the text(s).

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Begin your written text(s) essay here:

Statement number: 8

In 'The Merchant of Venice', a play written by Shakespeare, he challenges many of the audience's preconceptions and this makes for a more effective text. There were many preconceptions amongst society in England around 1596, when the play was written, however, Shakespeare addresses the three main ones: Jewish discrimination, homosexual discrimination and female discrimination.

The first preconception ~~an~~ Elizabethan audience, Shakespeare's audience, had was a ~~strong~~ hatred of Jewish people. The population of London ^(where the play was mostly performed) at the time was almost entirely ~~just~~ Christian, with only 100 Jews living in London at the time the play was written. This largely Christian population almost exclusively hated Jewish people and this ^{is} portrayed by the common belief ^{among Christians} that once a year, ~~they~~ ^{the} Jewish people would steal a Christian baby ^{kill it,} and drain their dead with its blood. This is obviously false, however, it shows just how much the majority of the ~~people~~ audience hated Jewish people. Shakespeare's

challenges this preconception by portraying a Jewish character in a sympathetic way. This Jewish character's name is Shylock and in one of Shakespeare's most famous monologues^{"Hath not a Jew eyes"} he discusses how Jews and Christians are alike. He states, "Hath not a Jew eyes" and "If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you pinch us, do we not bleed?" This goes completely against what the audience's preconceptions would have been and it therefore would have challenged their way of thinking towards Jews and was therefore a very effective text. Henry Irving was the lead character who played Shylock in the first and adapted the play's ending to a sympathetic ending for Shylock. This final scene showed ^{x lonely} Shylock walking across the stage to a house that no longer contained his daughter. This would cause even more sympathy in the audience and challenge their preconceptions even more to make for a very effective text.

Another preconception the audience had at the time when the 'Merchant of Venice' was written was a discrimination towards homosexuality, especially in men. In 1533, King Henry VIII passed the Buggery Act which deemed any male-to-male sexual activity to be illegal and punishable by death. This Buggery Act was re-enforced by Queen Elizabeth^{who reigned} in the time ~~as the~~ The Merchant

of Venice' was written. There was, therefore, a general societal dislike towards homosexuality as it was deemed illegal and punishable by death by the Royal Family. Shakespeare, however, challenges this societal preconception with the characters Bassanio and Antonio in the play. They have an openly homosexual relationship and are both protagonists. Their homosexuality is shown when Antonio kisses Bassanio early in the play and later again when Bassanio gives away his ^{his} ~~my~~ ^{his} 'binding' love to his wife, at the request of Antonio. He, therefore, is willing to sacrifice his love with his wife for Antonio, showing his love for Antonio is greater. Because the protagonists of the play are meant to be ^{good} holy Christians (in the eyes of the audience), their homosexuality is a challenge to the audience, stating that gay people ^{are} also good, holy ~~are~~ Christians and that it is not unlawful or unbecoming to be gay. Shakespeare's challenge to these ~~preconceptions~~ preconceptions, the audience had ~~made~~ forced the audience to think about them and this, therefore, made for a more effective text.

The final preconception that Shakespeare addresses in his play, 'The Merchant of Venice' was the discrimination against females. In the 16th century, by law, the man was the master of his wife and all of their property. In the play, Portia acknowledges this with her marriage speech, in

which she states, "Myself and what is mine
 to you and yours is now converted" and "Her gentle ~~and~~
 spirit commits itself to yours to be directed." This was
 the preconception that most, if not all of the audience
 had and so it would have been a ^{social} shock when
~~Shakespeare~~ Shakespeare challenged this ^{social} through the
 character of ~~the~~ Portia. In the play, Portia manipulates
 her situation and position in society so that she
~~has~~ has power ~~and is in control~~ over both Antonio
 and Bassanio. She dresses up as a ~~lawyer~~ lawyer
 and infiltrates the court to save Antonio's life
 so that he is in more debt to her than he
 could ever repay her. She then convinces Antonio
 and Bassanio to give her ^{Bassanio's} ~~the~~ ring ^{which binds} ~~binding~~ her
 love to Bassanio as a gift for saving Antonio's life.
 Because she is still disguised, Bassanio is
 therefore giving his ring to a ~~stranger~~ stranger. When she
 later shows Bassanio the ring that he 'gave away',
 she ~~is~~ becomes in control of him as he is
 in debt to her now. She ^{is} therefore, in control of
 both Bassanio and Antonio and, to the ~~audience~~ audience, this
 is a very alien concept and ~~is~~ forced them
 to think about this preconception that they had.
 This, therefore, made for a more effective text.

In the play 'The Merchant of Venice', written
 by Shakespeare, he

During the Elizabethan era, there were many
 preconceptions about different aspects of society

including discrimination against Jews, homosexuality and females. In Shakespeare's play, 'The Merchant of Venice', written in 1596, he addresses all of these preconceptions and challenges them which causes the audience to think and therefore makes for a more effective text.

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Merit exemplar 2017

Subject:	English	Standard:	91472	Total score:	05
Q	Grade score	Annotation			
8	M5	<p><i>The Merchant of Venice</i></p> <p>Clear and convincing understanding of how Shakespeare has challenged the preconceptions of the audience for whom he wrote.</p> <p>Mature understanding of the audience of the time.</p> <p>Three preconceptions clearly identified, explained and supported with evidence which is convincing.</p> <p>Structure restricts creativity – formulaic and predictable. However, clear moments of convincing and mature thought are scattered throughout.</p>			