

E KING LEAR – William Shakespeare¹

- (i) “Throughout the course of the play, both Lear and Gloucester are tragic characters, but Lear develops into the more heroic figure.”

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? Support your answer with reference to the play, *King Lear*.

Mark ex 60 by reference to the criteria for assessment using the following breakdown of marks.

| | |
|------|--|
| P 18 | |
| C 18 | |
| L 18 | |
| M 6 | |

| 60 marks | <u>A+</u> | <u>B</u> | <u>C</u> | <u>D</u> | <u>E-</u> |
|----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| 100% | 60 – 51 | 42 | 33 | 24 | 23 – 0 |
| 30% | 18 – 16 | 13 | 10 | 8 | 7 – 0 |
| 10% | 6 – 5 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 – 0 |

Candidates may choose to agree and/or disagree wholly or in part with the above statement. Candidates should engage with both Lear and Gloucester as tragic characters throughout the course of the play, and the extent to which Lear does or does not develop into the more heroic figure.

Answers should be supported with reference to the text.

Code:

TC for Lear as a tragic character/Gloucester as a tragic character

HF Lear or Gloucester develops/does not develop into the more heroic figure

Indicative material:

- King Lear - a classic Shakespearean tragic figure – a powerful man destroyed by his own flaws – egotism, lack of judgement, etc.
- Lear loses everything – kingdom/family/status/dignity/sanity/life
- Lear could be seen as deserving of his fate, making him less tragic/heroic
- Gloucester is an equally/lesser tragic character – losing status/family/sight/life
- physical/psychological pain, active/passive natures, prosaic/poetic language, levels of insight heighten heroic differences
- Lear develops greater wisdom, compassion and self-knowledge, becoming more heroic
- Gloucester’s heroism is reflected in his nobility, decency, dignity in enduring suffering
- Lear’s tragic response to Cordelia’s death enhances his mythic and heroic status **Etc.**

¹ For direction as to procedure when a candidate fails to answer on Shakespeare in either the Single Text or the Comparative Study, see Appendix 4 in this Marking Scheme.

(ii) “Shakespeare explores both the destructive and the redemptive power of love throughout the play, *King Lear*.”

Discuss this statement, supporting your answer with reference to the play.

Mark ex 60 by reference to the criteria for assessment using the following breakdown of marks.

| | |
|------|--|
| P 18 | |
| C 18 | |
| L 18 | |
| M 6 | |

| 60 marks | <u>A+</u> | <u>B</u> | <u>C</u> | <u>D</u> | <u>E-</u> |
|----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| 100% | 60 – 51 | 42 | 33 | 24 | 23 – 0 |
| 30% | 18 – 16 | 13 | 10 | 8 | 7 – 0 |
| 10% | 6 – 5 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 – 0 |

Candidates should discuss Shakespeare’s exploration of both the destructive and the redemptive power of love (although not necessarily equally) throughout the play, *King Lear*.

Answers should be supported by reference to the text.

Code:

DL for explores the destructive power of love

RL for explores the redemptive power of love

Indicative material:

Destructive power of love:

- Lear’s narcissism and love of power blinds him to the true nature of love
- the insincerity of Goneril/Regan/Edmund shows how false love can be dangerous/destructive
- Gloucester is diminished after he rejects his loving son Edgar
- Goneril and Regan’s illicit love for Edmund results in the demise of both women
- Cordelia ultimately loses her life because she acted out of genuine love for her father
- Kent and the Fool both suffer because of their unconditional love for Lear
- in the end, Lear is overwhelmed by the tragic loss of his beloved Cordelia **Etc.**

Redemptive power of love:

- Lear is redeemed by Cordelia’s unwavering, unconditional love
- Edgar’s love for Gloucester reinforces the idea that love can be redemptive
- Cordelia is rescued from Lear’s wrath by France who understood the true meaning of love
- Kent’s unqualified love/loyalty for King Lear is a positive redeeming force
- the Fool’s love/concern for Lear makes the old king more compassionate and humane
- Lear is finally redeemed when he realises the true meaning of love **Etc.**