

OXFORD Study Buddy

Revision and Exam Guide

QCE ENGLISH

UNITS 3 & 4

2023 EDITION

WRITTEN BY
KIRSTEN DUNSBY
KATE GLENISTER
CASSANDRA SMITH
RACHEL TOWNS
WENDY TROE
HELEN WALLACE
RACHEL WILLIAMS

ILLUSTRATED BY
JOSHUA SCOTT



FULLY
UPDATED
FOR THE 2023
PRESCRIBED
TEXT LIST

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SAMPLE



PLEASE FORGIVE THE
WAY I LOOK ... I CAME BY
FAIRY PORTAL AT QUITE
SHORT NOTICE YOU SEE! I
DIDN'T EVEN HAVE TIME TO
PACK A CHANGE OF CLOTHES
IN MY **CARRION**! YOU MUST
THINK I'M **RAVEN MAD**!
ENOUGH ABOUT ME THOUGH ...
LET'S GET PLANNING
FOR SUCCESS!



CHAPTER

1

STUDYING FOR SUCCESS

Before you start studying for your QCE English exam, it's important to set yourself up for success. That's exactly what this chapter is designed to do, so thanks for stopping by!

As soon as it's time to start studying for the external assessment, we recommend that you work through this whole chapter before doing anything else! You might choose to start studying at the beginning of the school year or at the start of your exam study period, but whatever you do, don't skip this chapter; it contains a lot of really important information and tips that might just give you the edge you're looking for.

YOUR THIRST FOR
KNOWLEDGE IS CRYSTAL
CLEAR! COMPLETE THIS
CHAPTER TO SCORE
YOUR FIRST KNOWLEDGE
CRYSTAL! GOOD LUCK!



1.1

OVERVIEW OF QCE ENGLISH UNITS 3 & 4

In this section we will provide a brief overview of how the QCE English Units 3 & 4 course is structured, list all of the concepts and topics that you will need to learn and explain how you will be assessed.

UNDERSTANDING THE QCE ENGLISH UNITS 3 & 4 COURSE STRUCTURE

The English General Senior Syllabus is the most important document supporting the QCE English course. It sets out all the content – known as subject matter – that you will be expected to learn and provides important information about how you will be assessed.

QCE English is a course of study consisting of four units (i.e. Units 1 & 2 and Units 3 & 4) taught over two years. In this revision and exam guide, we will only be focusing on aspects of the course that are relevant to the external examination, namely Unit 4 Topic 2 – Critical responses to literary texts. The topics you will be learning about in Unit 4 Topic 2 are summarised in Table 1.

Course structure – QCE English Unit 4 Topic 2

Unit 4 Close study of literary texts
Topic 2: Critical responses to literary texts <i>Subject matter:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Texts in context• Language and textual analysis• Responding to and creating texts

Table 1

Modified from *English General Senior Syllabus 2019 v1.5* © State of Queensland (QCAA) 2018, licensed under CC BY 4.0



1.1.1

Resource: English General Senior syllabus

Study tip

The English General Senior Syllabus sets out all of the information you are expected to learn and also provides important information on how you will be assessed.

In this chapter, we have summarised all of the key information relating to external assessment you need to know, but the QCAA may update the syllabus from time to time, so it's important that you make sure you are using the most current version.

Make sure you visit the QCAA website to download a copy of the English General Senior Syllabus and read it carefully before you sit your external assessment. To save you time, we've also included a link to it on your [obook assess!](#)



Study tip

This revision and exam guide is only designed to help you prepare for the summative external assessment, so if you need any further information about any of the summative internal assessments in QCE English Units 3 & 4, ask your teacher or refer to the syllabus.

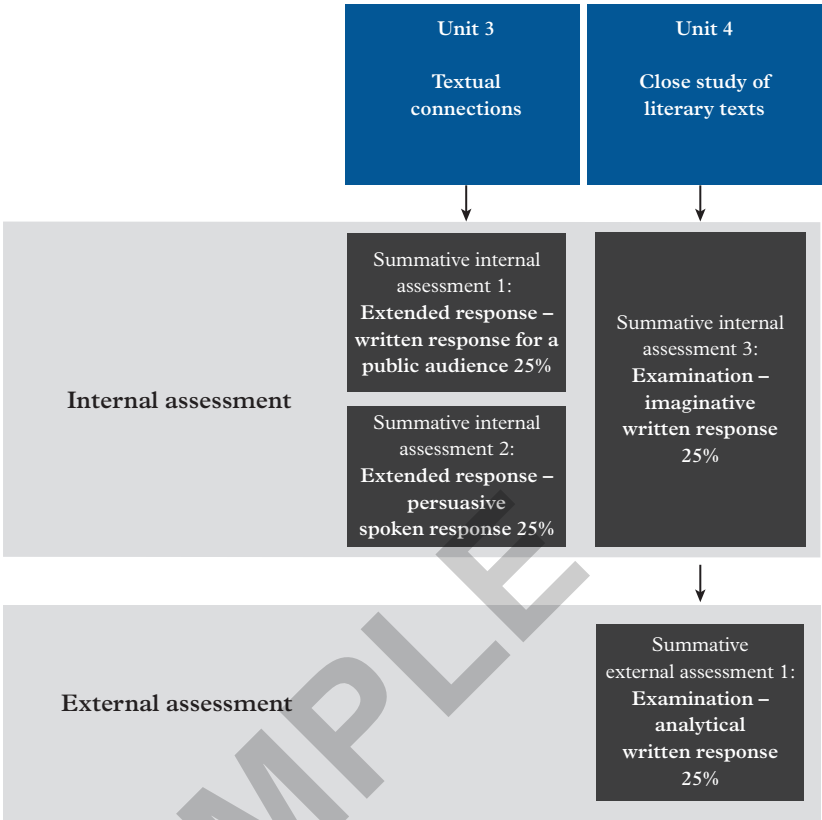


Figure 1 Assessment structure for QCE English Units 3 & 4

Modified from *English General Senior Syllabus 2019 v1.5* © State of Queensland (QCAA) 2018, licensed under CC BY 4.0



UNDERSTANDING THE QCE ENGLISH UNITS 3 & 4 ASSESSMENT STRUCTURE

You will be expected to complete a total of **four summative assessments** in QCE English Units 3 & 4. Summative assessments are designed to evaluate your understanding of the subject matter and compare your performance against the understanding of students from across the state.

Three of these assessments are **internal** and one is **external**, but all will contribute to your Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) calculation and to your Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE).


INTERNAL ASSESSMENTS

- Schools will develop **three internal assessments** for QCE English based on the subject matter described in Units 3 and 4 of the syllabus.
- The three summative internal assessments will be endorsed (i.e. the mark awarded by your teacher will be cross-checked and verified by an independent marker) and the results confirmed by the QCAA.
- As shown in Figure 1 on the next page, the three internal assessments will contribute **75 per cent to your overall mark**.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

- The QCAA will develop and mark the **external assessment** for QCE English. It is designed to assess your understanding of the learning described in Unit 4 Topic 2 of the syllabus (i.e. only the subject matter shown in Table 1 will be assessed).
- The summative external assessment for the QCE English course is made up of **one end-of-year examination** that is common to all schools (i.e. every student completing QCE English will sit the same exam at the same time on the same day).
- While no subject matter from Units 1 and 2 will appear on the examinations, you may be expected to draw on some foundational knowledge and skills learnt in Units 1 and 2 in order to answer questions.
- As shown in Figure 1, the summative external assessment will contribute **25 per cent to your overall mark**.





A FRIEND OF MINE HAS
MADE A CAREER OUT OF
WRITING AND SELLING
TEXT GUIDES. THE OTHER
DAY I ASKED HIM WHERE HE
GOT THE IDEA FROM AND
HE SAID, 'WELL, TO MAKE A
LONG STORY SHORT ...'

SOMETHING TO THINK
ABOUT AS WE DIVE IN ...



CHAPTER

2

TEXT GUIDES

In this chapter, we provide a guide for every text on the external assessment for QCE English. Each text guide includes the following sections:

- 'Spotlight on' the text
- Text synopsis
- Text structure
- Main characters
- Themes
- Symbols and motifs
- Key quotes.

In addition to these features, we also include a range of helpful tips and tricks designed to help you improve your writing and ace your exam!

WE'RE ON
THE SEARCH FOR YOUR
SECOND KNOWLEDGE
CRYSTAL. DON'T DOUBT
YOURSELF, OF QUARTZ
YOU CAN DO IT!



2.3

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



Questions
on page 224

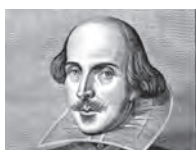


Figure 1 William Shakespeare
(baptised 1564, died 1616)

SPOTLIGHT ON *HAMLET*

In this section we will look at the background and context of the play, and how it relates to what was happening historically and politically at the time it was written. We will also look at some key details about the author, and the ways in which his personal life influenced his work.

- **Full title:** *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*
- **Type of text:** Play
- **Publication details:** Written around 1599–1601, first published 1603
- **Year of first performance:** 1607
- **Origin:** England

ABOUT THE TEXT

Hamlet is one of William Shakespeare's most famous works. It is a revenge tragedy set in Denmark during medieval times (thirteenth–fourteenth century) and tells the story of a young Danish Prince, Hamlet. As the play opens, Hamlet discovers his father has been murdered by his uncle, who then marries Hamlet's mother and takes the throne. The play follows Hamlet's efforts to seek revenge for his father's murder.

The tragedy is about Hamlet struggling to achieve revenge while reflecting deeply on the nature of mortality, or what it means to live or die. While not many can relate to the problem of killing a king to take revenge, most people can recognise themselves in Hamlet's reactions to facing difficult situations. If you have ever wondered about the meaning or purpose of living when we all eventually die anyway, you will probably relate to Hamlet!

Shakespeare wrote 37 plays: comedies, histories and tragedies. *Hamlet* is one of the tragedies, specifically a revenge-tragedy, a popular genre in his time. It is perhaps the most well-known and most quoted play in all literature. It is also his longest play at about 4000 lines and is regarded as his masterpiece by many critics.

Study tip

The historical and geographical context provide important ways of understanding the life of the characters during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in England. You can use this historical and geographical context in your analyses of the characters and themes of the play.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

William Shakespeare was an English playwright, poet and actor widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language, and the world's greatest dramatist. He lived in London, England in the late 1500s and early 1600s and wrote many plays and poems that were very popular. The plays he wrote were known for exploring the

behaviours of people, and for using powerful language and devices to portray certain themes, such as good and evil, the supernatural, death and love. His works were a direct

representation of his personal beliefs as a proud man of England with a focus on the relationship between the monarchy, religion and God.

In Shakespeare's early years, during the time of Queen Elizabeth I's rule (from 1558 to 1603), art and creativity, including theatre, thrived. England had a stable economy and political system. Overall, it was a peaceful place and time to live. However, after King James

took the throne in 1603, there were concerns about violence and political unrest. This period of change is known as an **interregnum**. Around this time a new way of thinking about the world, known as **humanism**, also emerged. Humanism challenged common beliefs about religion and the supernatural.

interregnum

a period when normal government is suspended, especially between successive reigns or regimes

humanism

a system of thought that became popular during the Renaissance centred around the importance of human beings, values and evidence in society rather than religion, gods and supernatural matters.

Examiner's tip

Exam markers are impressed by straightforward, honest introductory paragraphs – and a high-scoring essay needs one that clearly sets out the thesis of your response!

Use key words from the question you have selected in the opening sentence or paragraph of your essay. You should never lose sight of what the question is asking you to do, and don't let the marker lose sight of it either!

Study tip


Renaissance is French for 'rebirth'. It was a time after the Middle Ages when there was a revival in interest for classical learning. The period was marked by scientific discovery and exploration. Shakespeare was influenced by these contemporary ideas of his time, which challenged many medieval beliefs about the world.

In your exam, you will be marked on how well you can analyse the culture, attitudes and values included in your chosen text. These concepts are related to the context (the time and society a text was set in or written in), and they reflect the background of the author. Think about why Shakespeare wrote this play and what attitudes, values and beliefs he may have had.



WHY, EDNA?





WRITING ESSAYS CAN BE
A REAL CHALLENGE, BUT
PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT!
JUST MAKE SURE YOU STEP
OUTSIDE FOR SOME FRESH
EYRE BEFORE YOU MAKE A
START ON THESE BAD BOYS ...



CHAPTER

3

PRACTICE QUESTIONS AND PAST EXAMS

In this chapter, it's finally time to get down to business!

For each of the eight texts available to choose from on the exam, we've provided six practice essay questions for you to complete. We've also provided official QCAA past exam questions from the 2020 and 2021 external assessments (if available).

Here are a few tips and recommendations that will help you get the most out of this chapter:

- Don't look at any of the questions until you've finished your revision and preparation and complete the **practice questions** under exam conditions.
- After you complete each essay question, use the annotated response and marking advice in Chapter 4 to self-assess.

Notice to students

Never let me go by Kazuo Ishiguro and *The Yield* by Tara June Winch have been added to the **Prescribed text list** for the External Assessment for 2023.

As both texts will appear on the External Assessment for the first time in late 2023, no official QCAA past exam questions could be included in this chapter.

COMPLETE THIS
CHAPTER TO MINE YOUR
THIRD KNOWLEDGE CRYSTAL!
YOU (BIG SHINY)
ROCK!



3.3

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



Annotated
sample responses
for Questions
1–6 are available
on your obook
assess in

Chapter 4: 4.3
Hamlet

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1

How is the reader invited to view the concept of morality or conscience in *Hamlet*?

© State of Queensland (QCAA) Sample assessment 2020 Question a

QUESTION 2

What does the representation of Hamlet and Gertrude's relationship reveal about him?

© State of Queensland (QCAA) Sample assessment 2020 Question b

QUESTION 3

Hamlet's perspective is often communicated through soliloquies. Analyse how the use of Hamlet's self-reflection invites the reader to view his character.

QUESTION 4

Analyse the extent to which Ophelia's role in the play is significant.

QUESTION 5

Hamlet's delay in avenging his father's death is often interpreted as his fatal flaw.

To what extent do you agree with this perspective?

QUESTION 6

How is the reader invited to view the concept of mortality in *Hamlet*?



3.4

JANE EYRE BY CHARLOTTE BRONTË



Annotated
sample responses
for Questions
1–6 are available
on your eBook
access in

Chapter 4: 4.4
Jane Eyre

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1

How is the reader invited to view the concept of social class in *Jane Eyre*?

© State of Queensland (QCAA) Sample assessment 2020 Question a

QUESTION 2

Analyse the influence of Mrs Reed on Jane's development.

© State of Queensland (QCAA) Sample assessment 2020 Question b

QUESTION 3

Discuss the ways in which the concept of faith is presented in *Jane Eyre*.

QUESTION 4

How is the reader invited to view the institution of marriage through the representation of Jane and Rochester's relationship?

QUESTION 5

Evaluate how perspectives of gender are communicated in Brontë's *Jane Eyre*.

QUESTION 6

Analyse how the representations of Blanche Ingram and Bertha Mason position the reader to view the character of Jane.





OK, IT'S TIME
TO CHECK YOUR
ANSWERS!
METAPHORS BE
WITH YOU!



CHAPTER

4

ANNOTATED SAMPLE RESPONSES

In this chapter, we give you complete sample essays for every question in this book. That's a whopping ten annotated sample responses for almost every text! A tiny catch though; there were so many essays that there wasn't enough room to cram them all into this book without making it a door stop! So, here's what we did:

- Annotated sample responses for all of the **Practice questions** in Chapter 3 are available online via [obook assess](#). Follow the instructions on the inside front cover to activate your [obook assess](#), then use the contents menu to open Chapter 4 and select your chosen text.
- Annotated sample responses for all of the **Past exam questions** in Chapter 3 are available in print in this chapter.

Notice to students

The answers and marking advice provided in this chapter are intended for practice purposes only. Unless specifically credited, the QCAA has not written or endorsed this material.

WORK THROUGH
THESE ANNOTATED
SAMPLE RESPONSES
TO MINE YOUR FINAL
KNOWLEDGE CRYSTAL! MAY
THE QUARTZ BE WITH YOU!
DOUBLE STAR WARS PUNS,
EDNA! WHAT A WAY TO
FINISH!



4.3

HAMLET BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

PRACTICE QUESTIONS



Annotated sample responses for PRACTICE QUESTIONS 1–6 on page 226 in Chapter 3 are available online via [gbook assess](#).

Follow the instructions on the inside front cover of this book to activate your account, then go to Chapter 4 and select Section 4.3 *Hamlet*.

PAST EXAM QUESTIONS

SAMPLE RESPONSE FOR QUESTION A (2020 EXAM)

a) To what extent are Ophelia's deterioration and death significant in the play?

© State of Queensland (QCAA) External assessment 2020

In William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Ophelia's character performs many roles – she is daughter, sister, lover and victim. By Act IV, Ophelia is depicted wandering the castle, her mind in fragments, and drowns. Ophelia's deterioration and death is one of the most significant stories that Shakespeare tells in his play. Overall, the tragic journey taken by her character is designed to elicit sympathy from the audience. ①

The main role of women in medieval times was that of subordinate helper to men, be that as daughter, wife or mother. ② Ophelia is introduced as such: a dutiful daughter with limited power who is manipulated as an object by the men in the play. Her journey enhances the central themes of the play – mental illness and mortality – while also showing the audience how a woman of medieval times could be manipulated, controlled and abused. ③ Initially ④, Shakespeare depicts Ophelia as an innocent maid who needs the protection of her brother, Laertes. In doing so, Shakespeare presents his audience with a woman who will provide a contrast to the Ophelia in Act IV. ⑤ Laertes warns her not to 'lose [her] heart, or [her] chaste treasure open' – that is, her virginity. Laertes' warning could be interpreted as brotherly concern, but in fact demonstrates the high value placed on young women's chastity at the time. This is reinforced by the way her father Polonius belittles Ophelia's feelings for Hamlet. He speaks to her as if she is a naïve infant rather than an adult woman: 'Marry, I will teach you. Think yourself a baby.' He also urges her to 'tender [herself] more dearly'. Here, Shakespeare uses wordplay with his choice of 'tender' and 'dearly' as they both reference money as well as behaviour. This reveals Polonius as a true father of medieval times, objectifying Ophelia and viewing her as one of his assets. ⑥ While Laertes and Polonius both speak down to her in different ways, their impact is the same: Shakespeare successfully constructs Ophelia as an incapable, innocent woman who is instructed, owned and controlled. ⑦

Ophelia is powerless to disobey her father or king, and so is used as a tool to 'loose' upon Hamlet while they spy on him. Upon discovering this, Hamlet unleashes a tirade on Ophelia, asking: 'Are you honest? ... Are you fair?', suggesting she is neither. He further accuses her of being superficial: 'You jig and amble, and



you lisp.' Here, Shakespeare crafts Hamlet's rejection of Ophelia to elicit sympathy from the audience. The repetition of the pronoun 'you' highlights Hamlet's rejection as the term 'you' is a formal address and the term 'thou' (previously used between the pair) is reserved for intimate friends and partners.

By contrast, Ophelia forgives Hamlet's unfair treatment of her, listing Hamlet's noble qualities in her soliloquy: 'The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword.' Shakespeare's choice of words conjures up images of Hamlet's previous princely status, showing the audience that Ophelia still sees him as such despite his poor treatment of her. ⁸ This interaction is further evidence that prior to her deterioration Ophelia is represented as a powerless object. She is manipulated by her father and king but remains patient and kind despite the harsh rejection by her lover. As such, Shakespeare positions the audience to view her sympathetically.

Furthermore, Shakespeare juxtaposes ⁹ Ophelia's deteriorating mental state against Hamlet's pretend state of insanity to elicit sympathy from the audience. Shakespeare creates a stark contrast between Hamlet and Ophelia, who is not 'acting' mad, but rather is so devastated by her father's death and lover's rejection that the audience believes she is truly insane. ¹⁰ Her deteriorating state is viewed with pity by those in the court. She disobeys the usual court protocols by addressing her queen and king directly and giving them fennel and columbines, herbs that symbolise flattery and marital infidelity. Despite this, the king forgives her: 'Poor Ophelia/ Divided from herself and her fair judgment.' Shakespeare uses the technique of hendiadys to emphasise Ophelia's deterioration: being divided from herself 'and' her judgment reinforces the audience's impression of her being mad. ¹¹ As such, Shakespeare influences the audience to empathise strongly with 'poor' Ophelia's deterioration and reinforces the sympathetic portrayal of her character, creating a counterpoint to Hamlet's pretend madness – both of which contribute to making her deterioration and, ultimately, death a significant part of the play. ¹²

The description of Ophelia's death is designed to have maximum dramatic impact as it is delivered just as Claudius is manipulating Laertes to revenge his father's death by killing Hamlet. In the Queen's description, Ophelia is portrayed as passive even in death. She is described as 'incapable of her own distress' and a 'poor wretch', pulled to a muddy death. ¹³ Shakespeare's choice of the words 'incapable' and 'poor' contribute to the overall construction of Ophelia as pathetic, influencing the audience to feel sympathy for her. Interestingly, Ophelia is valued more highly in death, but is still treated as an object to fight over. At her funeral, the queen reveals that Ophelia could have become a princess: 'I hop'd thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife', influencing the audience to value her loss more highly. ¹⁴ Laertes is given the stage direction 'Leaps into the grave' to amplify the dramatic impact of her death. Hamlet then professes to love her more than 'Forty thousand brothers' could and is prepared to grapple with Laertes in her open grave over her dead body. The hyperbole Hamlet uses renders his claim outrageously melodramatic. ¹⁵ The audience is influenced to feel Ophelia's loss intensely through the over-dramatic responses of the other characters.

Ultimately, ¹⁶ Shakespeare depicts Ophelia as a conventionally dutiful, innocent daughter whose deterioration and death are a significant part of making *Hamlet* a tragedy. She is manipulated as an object by the significant men in the play, obediently submitting to her brother's, father's and king's wishes to break off her relationship with Hamlet, then spy on him. By play's end, Ophelia is depicted as utterly undone by her father's murder, wandering the castle as a pitiable victim. Her insanity and death contribute significantly to the play by evoking audience's sympathy while amplifying the play's central themes of mortality and mental illness.

Word count: 993



ANNOTATIONS FOR QUESTION A (2020 EXAM)

- 1 Criterion: Organisation and development**
Characteristic: Structure and development
 This student immediately *responds to the question* being asked: – ‘To what extent ...?’ – and responds with a valid and specific thesis, namely that Ophelia’s story is one of the most significant events in the play, and that her story is designed to elicit sympathy from the audience. From here, the examiner expects to see a discussion that backs up this position.
- 2 Criterion: Knowledge application**
Characteristic: Analysis of the ways ideas underpin the literary text
 The student shows that they have an understanding of the *cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and beliefs* that impacted women in the medieval times during which *Hamlet* is set.
- 3 Criterion: Organisation and development**
Characteristic: Selection and synthesis
 The student has *synthesised* the relevant themes of mental illness and mortality in *Hamlet* in order to *purposefully respond* to this essay question.
- 4 Criterion: Organisation and development**
Characteristic: Cohesion
 The use of the *cohesive device* ‘initially’ *introduces the idea* of the changing status of Ophelia, which is examined in the following paragraph.
- 5 Criterion: Knowledge application**
Characteristic: Analysis of perspectives and representations
 The student demonstrates their understanding of how Ophelia’s contrasting *representations in the text* have been crafted by Shakespeare to make her deterioration and death more significant and impactful.
- 6 Criterion: Knowledge application**
Characteristic: Analysis of the ways ideas underpin the literary text
 This student uses evidence from the text to show how *cultural assumptions, attitudes and beliefs* about women reinforce the relationship between Ophelia and her father Polonius.
- 7 Criterion: Organisation and development**
Characteristic: Sequencing and organisation
 This linking sentence demonstrates a *logical organisation of information and ideas*. By finishing this paragraph linking back to their thesis the student demonstrates organisation *not only within paragraphs, but also across the entire response*.
- 8 Criterion: Knowledge application**
Characteristic: Analysis of perspectives and representations
 This is a detailed and *purposeful analysis* of how the contrasting *representations* of Ophelia and Hamlet relate to and *emphasise* Ophelia’s sympathetic position.
- 9 Criterion: Textual features**
Characteristic: Language choices
 Rather than use the word ‘contrast’, this student uses the word ‘juxtaposed.’ This shows use of *vocabulary* that *expands upon ideas* related to Ophelia’s deteriorating status.
- 10 Criterion: Textual features**
Characteristic: Grammar and sentence structure
 This sentence *is well-structured and grammatically accurate, elaborating on ideas* related to the way Ophelia is represented in contrast with Hamlet.
- 11 Criterion: Knowledge application**
Characteristic: Analysis of the writer’s choices
 This shows how Shakespeare’s *aesthetic choice* of using hendiadys to join the two phrases using ‘and’ reinforces the idea of Ophelia’s division from her sanity.
- 12 Criterion: Organisation and development**
Characteristic: Structure and development
 This student *develops* their thesis *over the course of the response*, using linking sentences to reinforce the thesis that they set out in the introduction.

