

HKDSE Literature in English Paper 2 Mock Paper (2027)

TutorZone · Model answers, marking scheme and a two-week plan

TUTORZONE EXAM PRACTICE · DSE LITERATURE IN ENGLISH, PAPER 2 MOCK PAPER

Paper 1 tests extended argument; Paper 2 tests close reading — passage analysis, a comparison of set poems, and one poem you have never seen, all inside two hours. This original TutorZone mock paper follows the **2027 assessment framework** and includes passage questions, set-poem comparison questions, the **full text of a public-domain unseen poem**, model answers, a marking scheme, the mistakes markers see most often, and a two-week revision plan. Print it and work under timed conditions.

Direct Answer: what does Paper 2 test, and how should the two hours be spent?

Paper 2 Appreciation is worth **30% of the subject** and lasts **2 hours**. It has three sections and candidates answer one question in each: **Section A** critical analysis of a single passage from a set novel or play (choose 1 of 4; 10% of the subject mark); **Section B** a comparison of two or three set poems (choose 1 of 2; 12%); **Section C** one unseen poem (one question; 8%). The examination paper prints the passage and the poems. A sensible time budget is about 50 minutes for Section A, 45 for Section B and 25 for Section C. Paper 1 (3 hours, 50%) is the essay paper; together the two papers are 80%, with the SBA making up the remaining 20%.

Downloadable version: want to print the paper and work under timed conditions? [Download the PDF \(questions, model answers and marking scheme\)](#).

 **Print this paper (A4, opens in a new tab)**

The print dialog opens automatically; choose “Save as PDF” if you prefer. A PDF version is also available:



Paper 2 rewards reading quickly and closely — voice, imagery and the turn, not paraphrase.

Paper 2 at a glance, and the time budget

Section	Weight	What the paper asks	Time
A Passage analysis	10% of the subject	Multi-part analysis of one passage from a set novel or play; choose 1 of 4	50 min
B Set-poem comparison	12% of the subject	Compare two or three set poems, by the same or different poets; choose 1 of 2	45 min
C Unseen poem	8% of the subject	One poem you have not studied, printed in the paper; one compulsory question	25 min

⚠ The difference from Paper 1 that costs candidates most

Paper 1 asks you to *argue*; Paper 2 asks you to **analyse a text line by line** — syntax, punctuation, line breaks, shifts of tone, density of imagery. Many candidates answer Paper 2 in Paper 1 style, producing a general essay with no contact with the printed text, and that is where the marks are lost. Note too that each Paper 2 section carries a fixed weighting, so Section C (8%) cannot be left blank even though it deserves only about 25 minutes.

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Paper 2 mock paper (2 hours · original questions)

Instructions: answer one question from Section A, one from Section B, and the compulsory question in Section C — three answers in total. Every answer must refer closely to the text.

SECTION A — PASSAGE ANALYSIS (answer ONE question)

A1. Read the following passage from *The Merchant of Venice* (Act 4, Scene 1), in which Portia, disguised as the young lawyer Balthasar, addresses Shylock in open court.

*"The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes."*

(a) How does Portia's language in these lines make mercy sound both religious and practical? (b) Using this passage and the rest of the scene, explain how Shakespeare makes the audience doubt whether Venice is capable of mercy at all.

A2. Read the passage in which Maxim de Winter finally tells the narrator the truth about Rebecca. (a) How does du Maurier's sentence structure convey the narrator's shock? (b) How does the passage change the reader's understanding of Manderley as a place?

A3. Read the passage from *Top Girls* in which Marlene and her sister Joyce argue in the kitchen. (a) Examine how Churchill uses overlapping dialogue and interruptions to dramatise the sisters' relationship. (b) How does the scene prepare the audience for the play's judgement on Marlene's success?

A4. Read the passage from *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* in which Sandy Stranger watches Miss Brodie with the Brodie set. (a) How does Spark's narrative voice move between admiration and irony within the passage? (b) Discuss how this shifting voice shapes the reader's judgement of Miss Brodie.

SECTION B — SET-POEM COMPARISON (answer ONE question)

B1. Compare how *two* of the following set poems by Emily Dickinson present an inner state that cannot be spoken directly: 'There's a certain Slant of light', 'There came a Wind like a Bugle', 'Like Rain it sounded till it curved'.

B2. Compare how *two or three* set poems you have studied use the natural world to explore fear, threat or loss. (For example Ted Hughes's 'Thrushes' and Imtiaz Dharker's 'Speech balloon', or two poems by the same poet.)

SECTION C — UNSEEN POEM (compulsory)

Read the following poem, which you have not studied, and answer the question that follows.

Remember — Christina Rossetti (1862)

*Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day
You tell me of our future that you planned:
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad.*

C1. (a) Trace the shift in the speaker's thought between the octave and the sestet. (b) Examine how Rossetti's use of the sonnet form, repetition and contrast conveys the speaker's changing attitude to being remembered.

Why Section C prints a full poem but Section B cannot

The Section C poem is by Christina Rossetti (1830–1894) and is in the public domain, so it can be reproduced in full for genuine timed practice. Several texts examined in Sections A and B are still in copyright (Ted Hughes, Carol Ann Duffy, Imtiaz Dharker, Ken Liu and the novels' passages), so those questions name the text only — work from your own edition. In the examination the passage and the poems are printed in the question paper. Every question on this page is original and none of it is taken from HKEAA past papers.

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Marking scheme (mock) and what Paper 2 rewards

HKEAA marks Paper 2 holistically against level descriptors, with each section counting towards its fixed weighting (A 10%, B 12%, C 8% of the subject). The grid below is TutorZone's own tool for self-marking, aimed at the close-reading demand of Paper 2.

Descriptor	Weight	What Paper 2 markers look for
Contact with the text	30%	Is the answer working through the printed lines, or retelling the story? Do the quotations answer the question asked?
Analysis of language	30%	Effects, not labels: after naming a rhetorical question, say what it makes the reader feel compelled to answer.
Structure and the turn	20%	Identify the volta or tonal shift and explain what it does to the argument.
Organisation	10%	Every part of a multi-part question answered directly; comparison questions sustain one axis.
Language	10%	Accurate terminology — diction, enjambment, caesura, imagery, volta, sonnet octave/sestet — and few errors.

Level	Typical Paper 2 performance
5**	Handles tension inside the text (a poem that comforts and wounds at once) and links form to meaning — why a sonnet, why a line break here.
5	Accurate analysis with textual evidence; devices are named correctly but some effects stay on the surface.
4	Sound understanding, devices identified, little discussion of effect; quotations over-long and imprecise.
3	Mainly paraphrase, device-spotting without effect, no real engagement with the turn or structure question.
2 or below	Misreads the text, or writes personal response with no textual evidence.

Model answers (A1, B1 and C1 in full)

A1 model answer: *The Merchant of Venice* passage analysis (about 420 words)

(a) Portia's opening metaphor turns mercy into weather: it is 'not strain'd' but 'droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven'. The verb 'droppeth' has an archaic, liturgical ring — it belongs to scripture rather than to a courtroom — so before Shylock can answer, Portia has already moved the argument onto the ground of divine law, where no human bond can compete. The same four lines then shift into accounting language: mercy is 'twice blest' and it 'blesseth him that gives and that takes', a symmetry of profit and loss that a Venetian merchant would immediately understand. Portia is therefore speaking two languages at once — sermon and ledger — and the double appeal is her real rhetorical weapon.

(b) The scene dismantles that rhetoric almost as soon as it is spoken. Shylock replies that he has sworn an oath and demands 'the due and forfeit of my bond', and he is answered not by argument but by legal technicality: Portia wins only by forbidding him 'one drop of Christian blood'. Mercy, in other words, is never granted; it is out-lawyered. The proof lies after the trial, when the Duke spares Shylock's life yet confiscates his property and forces his conversion, and Gratiano jeers at a broken man. Venice therefore comes to look like a city that can quote mercy but cannot practise it, and Portia's 'gentle rain' reads in retrospect as a beautiful sentence with no consequences.

Examiner's note: Level 5 — the answer works on language (liturgical register plus commercial vocabulary) and answers the 'doubt' in the question with the oath and the sentence. For 5**, add the syntax of the four lines (three parallel clauses, the pause created by the colon) and the opposition between 'gentle rain' and 'blood'.

B1 model answer: comparing two Dickinson poems (about 420 words)

Dickinson specialises in states that language can only circle: in both poems the inner experience is defined by what it destroys rather than by what it is. In 'There's a certain Slant of light' the feeling arrives through metaphors of weather and music — the light 'oppresses, like the Heft / Of Cathedral Tunes' — and is then named with an oxymoron, a 'Heavenly Hurt'. The poem insists on its own unteachability: 'None may teach it — Any —'. In 'There came a Wind like a Bugle' the same method works through a militarised landscape: the wind is a bugle, the chill is green, and the household reacts 'As from an Emerald Ghost', barring doors against a threat it cannot name.

Both poems therefore convert feeling into a physical event before they convert it into meaning, and both use the dash to place a break exactly where an explanation should be — the pause after 'Heavenly Hurt, it gives us —' withholds the definition a normal sentence would supply. The difference is the direction of the fear. In the light poem the affliction is internal and arrives without a cause ('Sent us of the Air'), leaving 'internal difference, / Where the Meanings, are'; in the wind poem the disturbance begins outside — a mob of panting trees, rivers where houses ran — yet the poem ends by asserting continuity, that much can come and go 'and yet abide the World'. The first poem leaves the self permanently altered; the second lets the world survive the assault.

Examiner's note: Level 5 — one comparative axis (feeling objectified, dashes replacing explanation) plus a genuine difference (inside versus outside; the self altered versus the world enduring). For 5**, be stricter about form: stanza length and metre in each poem, and how 'Cathedral Tunes' mimics the weight it describes.

C1 model answer: unseen poem — Rossetti's 'Remember' (about 420 words)

(a) The octave is a set of commands: 'Remember me' recurs three times, each hedged by clauses that turn the request into a negotiation ('when I am gone away', 'when no more day by day / You tell me of our future that you planned'). By line eight the speaker has asked for a permanent obligation, even while admitting 'It will be late to counsel then or pray'. The volta at 'Yet if you should forget me for a while' reverses that pressure: forgiveness replaces demand, and the poem ends by preferring the beloved's happiness ('forget and smile') to fidelity ('remember and be sad').

(b) The sonnet form is the argument. A Petrarchan octave states a problem and a sestet resolves it, and that is exactly what happens: the first eight lines anatomise grief, the last six release the listener. Repetition does the same work within the halves — 'Remember me' three times in the octave, then 'forget' twice in the sestet — so the poem's vocabulary literally changes its mind. Contrast sharpens the turn: 'darkness and corruption' against 'smile', 'a vestige of the thoughts' against 'better by far'. The control shows in the details: the enjambment at 'Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay' makes the syntax physically hesitate, and the caesura in 'Only remember me; you understand' catches the breath of someone who knows the request is excessive. Rossetti uses the most disciplined of forms to dramatise a discipline of feeling: the speaker teaches herself to let go.

Examiner's note: 5** — the volta is located at line nine, the sonnet shape is treated as meaning rather than decoration, and enjambment and caesura are used as evidence. This is the correct route into an unseen poem: form and turn first, feeling second, theme last.

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Answer plans for the other questions, and the mistakes to avoid

Question	Must include	Most common error
A2 the <i>Rebecca</i> confession	Short sentences and pauses conveying shock; the confession turning Maxim from victim into killer; Manderley shifting from ideal home to crime scene.	Retelling the plot (Rebecca is dead) instead of analysing sentence rhythm.
A3 the <i>Top Girls</i> kitchen	Overlapping dialogue showing that the sisters cannot truly speak to each other; the 1970s kitchen as a site of class and gendered labour; how the scene prepares the moral judgement on Marlene.	Analysing it as ordinary conversation, ignoring stage directions and the reverse chronology.
A4 <i>The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie</i>	A narrative voice that slides between admiration and irony (Sandy's viewpoint, the adult retrospective tone); the Brodie set as both chosen and manipulated.	Arguing only that Miss Brodie is good or bad, without addressing the shifting tone itself.
B2 nature versus fear	A single comparative axis (nature as an unnameable threat); instinct and violence in Hughes, language and identity in Dharker; discuss sound — plosives, stress — not just imagery.	Translating the poem into prose and discussing content with no attention to sound or form.

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Work this alongside Paper 1

Paper 1 is the three-hour Essay Writing paper (50% of the subject), examining novels, plays and short-story comparison. Paper 2 examines passages and poetry. The writing skills overlap — thesis, precise short quotation,

explaining effect — but the marking emphasis differs, so alternate the two papers week by week.

- **Paper 1 mock paper** — TutorZone also publishes [DSE Literature in English Paper 1 \(2027\) with model answers and a marking scheme](#); use it first for essay structure, then this page for close reading.
- **Course and exam overview** — for the full syllabus, SBA and university pathways, read the [DSE English Literature guide](#).
- **More practice** — browse all [exam practice papers](#), or the [subject guides](#) for other courses.

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A two-week Paper 2 sprint plan

Days	Focus	Output
1–3	Read two poems by each of the five set poets; mark the turn and three key images in every poem	Ten poem cards
4–6	Comparison practice: build three comparative axes (sound, imagery, structure) on one theme	Three comparison plans
7–9	Passage analysis: take one passage each from the set novels and plays and write three sub-questions	Six passage drills
10–11	Unseen poem: one timed 25-minute answer a day, then mark against the grid	Two unseen-poem answers
12–14	Full paper (three questions in two hours), then rewrite the weakest answer	One full paper + one rewrite

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Frequently asked questions

Q1: How many questions must I answer in Paper 2, and is Section C a choice?

Three answers in total: one from Section A (a choice of four), one from Section B (a choice of two) and Section C, which is a single compulsory question on an unseen poem. The paper lasts two hours.

Q2: How is Paper 2 weighted?

Paper 2 is 30% of the subject, made up of Section A (10%), Section B (12%) and Section C (8%) — all expressed as percentages of the whole subject. Paper 1 carries 50% and the SBA 20%.

Q3: How do I tackle a poem I have never seen?

Read it three times — once for feeling, once to mark the images, once to find the turn. Then judge the form (is it a sonnet? how are the lines divided?) to work out the emotional direction before writing about theme. Keep quotations short and exact; one or two lines will carry an argument.

Q4: May I compare two poems by the same poet in Section B?

Yes. The framework requires 'two or three set poems either by the same or different poets', and two poems by one poet often make the comparative axis easier to sustain.

Q5: How much should I quote?

As little as possible. A line, half a line, or two or three key words usually carry the most weight; long quotations eat the space you need for analysis and are easy to misquote.

Q6: Is this an official HKEAA paper?

No. Every question was written by the TutorZone teaching team to match the 2027 framework's question types. The Section C poem is in the public domain and is printed in full; texts still in copyright are named but not reproduced. For official past papers use the HKEAA website.

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Further resources and next steps

- **Official resources** — the HKEAA Literature in English assessment framework and List of Set Texts (hkeaa.edu.hk). Set texts change every year: for 2027 the novels are *Rebecca* and *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* and the plays *The Merchant of Venice* and *Top Girls*; from 2028 the novels become *Wuthering Heights* and *The Road*. Always check the framework for your own examination year.
- **For parents** — Paper 2 is built by reading poetry aloud. Once a week, read one poem together and name one effect of sound; that is worth more than memorising model essays.

Note: the information above is for reference only; examination arrangements follow HKEAA's official announcements. The questions and model answers in this paper were written and subject-checked by the TutorZone teaching team, with the public-domain poem reproduced as published and AI assistance in drafting.

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Next step: find a tutor, or become one

For parents and students: would you like someone to mark your passage analysis and poem comparison question by question against the descriptors? Post a free tuition case (subject, level, preferred time) and TutorZone will match you with a Literature in English tutor:

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