2.25 Literature: The War of the Worlds (H.G. Wells): 30-minute Pack

Total Marks

AQA / EDEXCEL / EDUQAS GCSE Literature 19th-century novel · about 30 minutes

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Explain how Wells presents the curate's mental and emotional collapse as the invasion continues.

(Total for Question 1 is 8 marks)

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2 'Wells uses the curate and the artilleryman to present two equally flawed responses to catastrophe.'

Starting with this idea, write about how far you agree, referring to the novel as a whole. In your answer you should refer to the ways Wells presents character, and to the novel's historical and social context.

(Total for Question 2 is 30 marks)

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Mark scheme · 2.25 Literature: The War of the Worlds (H.G. Wells): 30-minute Pack

Question 1

Level 4 Clear, well-supported explanation: analyses more than one way the curate's collapse is presented, with well-chosen reference to the text. **7-8**

Level 3 Clear explanation: explains at least one clear way the curate's collapse is shown, with relevant reference to the text. **5-6**

Level 2 Some explanation: identifies a relevant point about the curate with some reference to the text. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple, limited explanation: makes a simple or general comment on the curate with little development. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- the curate is introduced already shaken and self-absorbed, focusing on his own losses rather than the wider disaster around him
- he repeatedly interprets the invasion in religious terms, seeing it as a punishment or judgement, which the narrator finds irrational and unhelpful
- his behaviour becomes increasingly erratic and selfish once the two men are trapped together, eating and drinking without restraint despite the danger
- his loud, uncontrolled outbursts threaten to reveal their hiding place to the Martians, turning his instability into a direct danger to the narrator's survival
- the narrator's growing impatience, and his eventual violence towards the curate, shows how the pressure of survival strips away ordinary civilised restraint from both men
- Wells uses the curate's decline partly to question whether a purely religious response to catastrophe is adequate compared with practical reasoning

Question 2

Level 4 Compelling, critical response: sustained, sophisticated engagement with the statement across the whole novel; judicious, precisely selected references; perceptive analysis of characterisation, form and structure with consistently precise subject terminology; contextual understanding woven fully into the argument. **25-30**

Level 3 Critical, exploratory response: exploratory, critical engagement with the statement sustained across the novel; judicious range of references; analyses effects of characterisation and structure with precise subject terminology; contextual factors integrated fully where relevant. **17-24**

Level 2 Detailed, well-structured response: consistently clear, detailed engagement with the statement; well-chosen range of references; explains effects of characterisation and structure with subject terminology used accurately; understanding of relevant context clearly shown. **9-16**

Level 1 Simple or clear response: simple or clear engagement with the statement with some relevant reference; some comment on characterisation with limited or accurate use of subject terminology; some or little awareness of context. **1-8**

Indicative content:

- agree: the curate's collapse is driven by an inward-looking, self-pitying response, focused on his own suffering and a search for religious meaning rather than practical survival, making him a largely passive, damaging presence
- agree: the artilleryman's flaw is different but comparably serious, since his confident, detailed talk of an underground future for humanity is never matched by sustained action, exposing him as someone who prefers grand words to genuine effort
- agree: both men ultimately become a burden or disappointment to the narrator, who is forced to separate from each once their limitations become clear, suggesting Wells presents both as failed models of leadership in a crisis
- qualify/counter-view: the curate's collapse can be read more sympathetically as an understandable, human response to trauma and the loss of a stable, ordered world, rather than simple weakness
- qualify/counter-view: the artilleryman's ideas, however poorly realised in practice, do at least attempt to imagine a rational, long-term response to the invasion, which arguably makes him more constructive in intention than the curate
- qualify: a reader might argue the two figures are not simply equally flawed but represent two different Victorian institutions, organised religion and the military, both of which Wells suggests prove inadequate against an entirely new kind of threat
- context: Wells wrote at a time when both church authority and military strength were widely respected sources of confidence, so presenting representatives of each as ultimately unable to cope invites readers to question those institutions' real value in a crisis
- candidates might also weigh the narrator's own role as a more balanced, self-aware alternative to both men, since his willingness to reflect critically on his own actions contrasts with the curate's self-pity and the artilleryman's bluster

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